

**Text, Context and Culture:**  
**The Translatability of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio***

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**Declaration:**

I declare that this thesis is the result of my own research and composition.

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### **Publications:**

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## Abbreviations

- LF:** *London Fields*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990.  
**CL:** *Campos de Londres* (tr. Bernardo Moreno). Barcelona: Anagrama, 1991.  
**Ts:** *Tiempo de silencio*. Barcelona: Seix barral, 1982.  
**TS:** *Time of Silence*. (tr. George Leeson). London: John Calder, 1965.

## Abstract

The notion of translatability has been central to the scholarly discourse of many translators and translation theoreticians since the eighteenth century. The debate on translatability vs. untranslatability, however, has been largely abandoned in modern translation theory, although many practising translators accept the existence of untranslatability. This apparent paradox can be understood if it is argued that the limits of translation are not well-defined. Two texts, *London Fields* (Martin Amis, 1989) and *Tiempo de silencio* (Luis Martín-Santos, 1962), will be tested against the traditional notions of translatability and untranslatability, in the framework of English and Spanish. The inherent translatability of these novels would seem to be endorsed by the fact that they have both been translated. However, it will be claimed here that the possibility of translating a text at a certain level is not tantamount to asserting the translatability of such a text.

For the purpose of analysis, elements which may lead to losses in translation have been classified in six different categories. This particular taxonomy is aided by the high degree of coincidence in the type of translation problems that both novels present. Reference will be made to the published translations of the two novels, but an overall assessment of their quality is not envisaged as a goal.

The methodology used is in line with that advocated within Translation Studies, in that it involves practical case studies of literary texts and incorporates elements from disciplines external, in principle, to translation. A critical review of specialised literature is undertaken to show that translation scholars through the ages have taken different stands on the issue of (un)translatability. A consideration of general critical studies on *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* confirms the strong source-culture/source-language bias of both novels. This supports not only the argument that their translatability may be jeopardised by elements which are inherent in the texts and by others tangential to them, but also, that the perception and understanding of the texts in a foreign context should be taken into account when assessing their translatability.

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## Preface

The purpose of this study is to test two texts, *London Fields* (1989), by Martin Amis and *Tiempo de silencio* (1962)<sup>1</sup>, by Luis Martín-Santos, against the traditional notions of translatability and untranslatability, within the framework of English and Spanish. It is propounded here that these two novels may be considered relatively untranslatable, and that their untranslatability does not only lie with the texts themselves (i.e. the translation difficulties are not purely linguistic), but also with external factors, such as the relationship between the author and his audience or the expectations of the readers (i.e. the translation difficulties may arise from cultural factors). The approach adopted in this study is in line with that advocated by Translation Studies, for two reasons:

a. There has always been a call in Translation Studies for practical analysis. Theo Hermans states: “there should be a continual interplay between theoretical models and practical case studies” (1985: 10) and Peter Bush maintains: “If literary translators need a theory, [...] then it must be a theory with and not without the subject it is studying.” (1997: 18).

b. Translation Studies is a multidisciplinary discussion arena. Special attention is paid to the translation of literature, which allows for the incorporation of concepts which derive from disciplines such as literary theory, sociology, anthropology, or linguistics.

The elements which present difficulties in the translation of two novels into English (*Tiempo de silencio*) and Spanish (*London Fields*) are identified and analysed, in order to assess how, if at all, they affect the translatability of the two novels. For methodological reasons, a taxonomy of these elements was established, after grouping examples into categories. These are not perfectly distinct categories: interferences can be found across the board. The categories outlined in this study are not specific to *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*. On the contrary, they can be found (either isolated or in various combinations) in other texts, regardless of whether or not they may pose problems for the translator. Therefore, an extrapolation of the findings expounded in this study and their application to other pieces of literature is feasible.

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<sup>1</sup>The copyright date of this novel is 1961. The definitive edition did not appear until October 1980.



The categories mentioned in the previous paragraph, into which the problematic elements fall, have been approached in a theoretical manner by many scholars in the field of translation (Bassnett-McGuire, Hatim and Mason, Hermans, Hervey and Higgins, Newmark, Nida, Snell-Hornby and Venuti are amongst the most significant figures in recent times). The originality of this present study lies in the systematic application of these categories to the two specific texts mentioned above in order to ascertain their translatability. The model proposed here can be applied, with the requisite adjustments, to other novels.

Another original contribution of this thesis is an approach to *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* from a cross-cultural point of view<sup>2</sup>. Focusing on these texts from a “foreign” perspective throws a new light on them and, as a result, highlights aspects of the novels which had not been previously considered from such an angle. As far as the critical literature on *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* is concerned, nothing can be found specifically on their translatability. Many critics have, nevertheless, dealt with features which affect this issue. They will be quoted and their views commented on when appropriate. When no source is quoted, it should be assumed that the ideas presented and the examples proposed are original. Questions such as translation loss, compromise and compensation will also be addressed when relevant.

There will be references to the published translations of the two novels (*Campos de Londres*, Barcelona: Anagrama, 1991, by Bernardo Moreno; and *Time of Silence*, London: John Calder, 1965, by George Leeson), in order to illustrate the use of specific strategies. However, the aim of this study is to identify and analyse general translatability problems and not to assess the competence or skill of specific translators. That is to say, the focus will not be upon what has been done, but rather on what can or cannot be done. An assessment of the quality of the published translations is not envisaged as an issue. However, the approach by the translators to certain problematic features can be used to illustrate the losses that may be sustained, or the success with which difficulties can be overcome.

When relevant, alternative ways in which to tackle problematic features and/or compensation strategies for such features will be suggested. Nevertheless, the production of new translations of these novels which avoid the pitfalls evident from the published translations is not an objective. The intention is to present the factors

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<sup>2</sup> It can be argued that this was also the approach of the translators of these novels. However, theirs was a pragmatic exercise, as opposed to what is presented here: a critical analysis.



which should be taken into consideration in order to produce satisfactory target texts. This will be done on the assumption that translation loss will have to be accepted as unavoidable in some cases.

The translation of both novels will be approached from the understanding that the target texts should not be intended for theoretical purposes, but were addressed to the general public. This differentiation appears to be important, given that translation understood as an academic or philosophical exercise can stretch the limits of the concept (see, for instance, comments on Derrida's views on p. 45). The problems analysed in this study are those that concern the translator who needs to meet the expectations of an audience looking for a reading experience which is comparable to that of the readers of the source text.

*London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* were selected for two reasons. First, because they rely heavily on their own cultural context, i. e. they are source-culture oriented (for clarification on terminology used, see Appendix A). Second, because the mode of expression used in these novels is highly elaborate: Martin Amis' and Luis Martín-Santos' use of language responds to a wish to give words an identity of their own, rather than using them as simple blocks with which to construct a story. The combination of these two factors suggests that the translatability of these texts may be jeopardised on two fronts. This could be used to explain, at least partially, the difference in popularity between the originals and their respective translations (see Appendix B), since the reason behind the difference in popularity between the original version of a text and its translations may hinge on many factors.

However, two main considerations seem to be essential when assessing the translatability of a text:

- a. Its content may have a special appeal for a specific audience, because of its significance within a given cultural frame.
- b. Its formal characteristics may be difficult to reproduce in a language different from that in which they were originally conceived and created.

If both aspects are interlinked, the process of translation may become problematic. This study is concerned not only with the aspects which may pose difficulties to

translators if undetected or misinterpreted, but also (and mainly) with those aspects which may be relatively untranslatable even when they have been adequately identified.

As far as the theory of translation is concerned, emphasis has traditionally been placed on the difficulties to which the formal characteristics of a text may give rise. Even when cultural untranslatability has been considered, the tendency was towards placing it in a secondary position in relation to linguistic untranslatability, as being more easily overcome (see: Catford, 1965: 99; Wilss, 1982: 50). It is propounded in this study that cultural differences may render a text relatively untranslatable.

An *a priori* division between linguistic and cultural translatability problems will be avoided. It would be inappropriate to establish such a differentiation, since one of the concerns of this study is with the analysis of the cultural relevance within translation of certain items or features when expressed verbally. The existence of very close links between language and culture would appear to support this approach.

Textual components, such as formal characteristics or content-related aspects, can have an extra-textual dimension added since links are inevitably established between a piece of literature and a context which is external to it, through the people who access the text. The relationship between original authors and source-text readers is essentially different from the relationship between translators and target-text readers, since it is established on the basis of different reference points, assumptions, knowledge and experience.

The translation difficulties which affect *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* have a similar nature, but it can be assumed that they will operate in a different manner, due, firstly, to the specific characteristics of either text and, secondly, to the route that the process of translation follows: from English to Spanish or from Spanish to English. The latter aspect is founded on a postulate which was assumed by Translation Studies as a result of a theory elaborated by Itamar Even-Zohar: that hierarchical relations do exist between source and target texts and cultures. Bassnett remarks, on the subject of Even-Zohar's contention: "Polysystems theory [...] argues that systems are never identically positioned, and that notions of the superiority or inferiority of a text or a literary system are always in play." (1993: 145-46).

Genetic and cultural distance between a given pair of languages generally determines the degree of difficulty in translating from one into the other. In the specific instance of a translation from Spanish into English or *vice versa*, both the linguistic gap and the cultural one are far from extreme. They are, nevertheless, substantial enough to pose significant translation problems. The two texts to be analysed in this study, *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, will illustrate this. General differences between both languages (as, for example, verbal systems or word order) will be ignored, unless specific occurrences pose problems as far as the translation of either text is concerned. In the same way, elements which may potentially pose difficulties for the translator but do not do so in the case of *London Fields* or *Tiempo de silencio* (such as divergences in semantic groups, for instance those referring to fauna and flora, which can cause translation problems within some texts) will be disregarded, too.

Specific examples of the implications that the characteristics of these texts have from the point of view of translation will be analysed in the following chapters. The presentation of the content of this study will be as follows:

**Chapter 1** starts with a presentation of the assumptions concerning the aims and nature of translation and the role of the translator from which this study will be developed. It is followed by an overview of the issue of the translatability of texts within the history of translation scholarship.

**Chapter 2** analyses the implications that the style of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* has for the translation of these texts.

**Chapter 3** discusses the implications that the usage of different linguistic varieties (regional dialects, sociolects and anomalous occurrences) has for the translation of the two novels.

**Chapter 4** analyses the issues connected with the translation of proper names in these two novels.

**Chapter 5** assesses the difficulties faced by the translator with regard to the humorous component of the two novels.

**Chapter 6** establishes the nature of the problems associated with intertextual occurrences in translating the two novels.

**Chapter 7** analyses the implications that the linguistic manifestation of culturally-marked concepts or elements has for the translation of the two novels.

**Chapter 8** presents the conclusions extracted from this study.

Chapters 2 to 7 follow the same structure. They start with a general introduction to the subject matter, which is followed by individual consideration of the implications for *London Fields* and then *Tiempo de silencio*, with examples. The final section of each chapter consists of a summary of the issues that have been considered in each individual category.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The notion of translatability has been central to the scholarly discourse of many translators and translation theoreticians since the eighteenth century. The debate on translatability vs. untranslatability, however, has been largely abandoned in modern translation theory (see Bassnett-McGuire 1980: 66). This can be attributed mainly to three factors: firstly, to ideological considerations, whether these present a humanitarian hue (see Nida 1964: 2) or a political one (see Kade, in Wilss, 1982: 46); secondly, to a certain scientism (which can be traced back to Catford, 1965: 99), since what was traditionally defined as “cultural untranslatability” falls, to an extent, within the realm of the unquantifiable; and thirdly, to the expansion in the concept of translation, which makes acceptable a number of strategies previously considered to lie outwith the limits of this concept (see, for instance, developments in Skopostheorie, Reiss & Vermeer 1984, amongst others).

On the other hand, many practising translators accept the existence of untranslatability, as exemplified by Berman’s question: “what of the untranslatability, that is to say, of that which in the difference of languages purports to be the irreducible, at a level which need not be that of linguistics, and which every translator encounters as the very horizon of the ‘impossibility’ of his practice – an impossibility which he, nevertheless, has to confront and live with?” (1992: 16).

The apparent paradox has to be understood in the light of the third factor outlined above: the fact that the limits of translation are not well-defined. To quote Berman again: “Different languages are translatable, but they are also different, hence to a certain extent untranslatable. But other questions arise. For example: how does the translation between languages relate to what Jakobson calls the intralingual translation? That is to say, reformulation, rewording? [...] at issue is *the question of the limits of the field of translation and the translatable.*” (1992: 85). Indeed, Jakobson’s notion of dynamic translatability requires a loose rather than strict approach to translation (see Pym & Turk 1998: 275).

Thus, it would appear that some literary texts possess characteristics which can make them partially untranslatable, in the sense that, when they are expressed in a different language, for a foreign target audience, they cannot produce in themselves a reading

experience which is comparable to that of the source text. These are texts, for example, which rely very heavily on their own cultural context for their interpretation, or whose formal characteristics are essential for their comprehension. *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* would appear to belong in both these categories. This is not to say that they cannot be translated (the existence of published versions of these novels in other languages, for one thing, proves the opposite); rather, that when rendered in a language other than that in which they were conceived and devised, they become “different” texts. The reason for this is that some elements which are essential for their original configuration cannot be reproduced in a foreign language in such a way that the target-text readership could grasp their significance as it was shown in, and probably evident from, the source text. This approach goes back to the notions of translatability and untranslatability in the traditional sense, notions that seem to be addressed in modern theory under different tags in the context of the “Cultural Turn” that Translation Studies has taken in the 1990’s (see Gentzler 1993: 185).

For the purposes of this study, certain basic elements that come into play in literary translation should be addressed: the aims of translation; the issue of authorial intention; the role of the translator and the target audience, the two ends bridged by the process of translation; and the notions of translatability and untranslatability.

### *1. Basic aims of translation*

It can be argued that the most basic objective of interlingual translation is to reproduce in a language B (target language) a text originally written in a language A (source language). The purpose of such a process is to make the original text comprehensible for an audience which cannot have access to it, most likely because they do not understand language A.

Eugene A. Nida sums up the contributions of many translation scholars and translators themselves throughout the ages on how to define “translation” when he proposes four basic requisites that the result of this activity, the target text, should present:

- (1) making sense, (2) conveying the spirit and manner of the original, (3) having a natural and easy form of expression, and (4) producing a similar response. (1964: 164)



The validity of the last three principles is, however, arguable and some scholars have indeed disputed it. Although it was first proposed by E. V. Rieu in 1953, the principle of equivalent effect is usually associated with Nida, who used it as the basis for his theory of dynamic equivalence<sup>3</sup>, which he enunciated as follows: “the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message (1964: 159).

Despite the clarity and consistency of Nida’s discussion of translation (in the many articles and books he wrote or co-wrote from the 1960’s), his theory has aroused intense controversy. One of the most recent contributions to the debate is that from Venuti. In *The Translator’s Invisibility* (1995), Venuti elaborates on the notions he presented in his introduction to *Rethinking Translation* (1992). According to him:

a fluent strategy performs a labor of acculturation which domesticates the foreign text, making it intelligible and even familiar to the target-language reader, providing him or her with the narcissistic experience of recognising his or her own culture in a cultural other, enacting an imperialism that extends the dominion of transparency with other ideological discourses over a different culture. (Venuti, 1992: 5)

Thus, foreignising translation, i.e. one which does not possess, in Nida’s words, “a natural and easy form of expression”, can be advocated against the form of cultural imperialism which is exerted by transparent, domesticating translation. It is true that imposing one’s cultural values onto products from different cultural communities can be perceived as a transgression.

The issue of the relationship which is established between languages and cultures in translation has also been explored by other critics. Susan Bassnett criticises the validity of Nida’s theory as follows: “The obvious problem with a theory of equivalence as sameness is that it denies the existence of hierarchical relations between source and target texts and cultures and assumes that translation takes place on a vertical axis, between identically-placed systems.” (1993: 145-46).

It can be argued that hierarchical relations exist by virtue of the greater or lesser influence that linguistic communities have in a global context and not just as regards

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<sup>3</sup> The concept itself is necessarily dynamic, since the response of the readers will vary as time passes. For this reason, many literary works are periodically re-translated.

the power of a specific culture upon another<sup>4</sup>. However, foreignising translation, for all its virtues<sup>5</sup>, may not appeal to readers of commercial texts, to whom it may appear as an obstacle to their understanding of the text.

As well as being opposed by those who think that suppressing the foreignness of the source text is a form of ethnocentric violence, Nida's equivalence theory has been attacked on several other fronts. Newmark (1981, 1988) found fault with the fact that it prioritises target-language readers over the source text and its author, and rejected its applicability to all sorts of texts. Gutt (1991) and Quian Hu (1994) use the incommensurability of languages as an argument against dynamic equivalence. Jin, who co-authored *On Translation* (1984) with Nida, agrees with the equivalent-effect principle, but he qualifies it: he claims that a difference should be established between the *effect* of the message and the *response* of the target readers (1989).

The critics of the equivalence-of-response principle who claim that it does not easily stand close scrutiny maintain that it may be impossible to ascertain what kind of response the target text provoked in its readers. Nevertheless, this principle has been advocated by scholars and translators for centuries. Alexander Fraser Tytler defined what he thought would constitute a good translation in his "Essay on the Principles of Translation" (1790) as:

that in which the merit of the original work is completely transfused into another language, as to be distinctly apprehended, and as strongly felt, by a native of the country to which that language belongs, as it is by those who speak the language of the original work. (in Lefevere, 1992: 128)

Schleiermacher adds a diachronic dimension to this postulate when he asserts in "Über die verschiedenem Methoden des Übersetzens" (1813) that the translator "merely wants to produce an impression on the reader that is similar to the impression the original must have made on its contemporaries who read it in their own language" (in Lefevere, 1992: 149). The problems which arise from adhering to this ideal are highlighted by Matthew Arnold, who states in "On Translating Homer" (1861) that

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<sup>4</sup> For example, the influence of English-speaking communities is exerted worldwide, in that their cultural characteristics or features will be easily recognisable among other communities, but not *vice versa*. In this sense, it affects a variety of cultural communities in a similar way. However, a more specific type of power relation could be exemplified by the influence of English models and expectations on the translation of literature produced in the vernacular languages of former British colonies.

<sup>5</sup>For instance, it provides more information about the source culture than naturalising translation.



“we cannot possibly tell *how* the *Iliad* ‘affected its natural hearers’<sup>6</sup>.” (in Ballard, 1992: 242).

Thus, the arguability of this equivalence-of-response principle seems to lie with the fact that it presupposes knowledge of the effect which the source text had on its readership. It seems incontestable that different readers will have different understandings of a given text and will, therefore, respond to it in different ways. Nida himself states: “Of course, no communication, even within a single language, is ever absolute (for no two people ever understand words in exactly the same manner)” (1969: 4-5). Since the act of translating presupposes an act of mediation, the mediator (the translator) will respond to the source text in an individual manner and he or she can reproduce (or attempt to reproduce) the effect that the original had *on him- or herself*. However, the translator cannot predict the effect that the target text will have on its readership, nor the manner in which this readership will respond to it, in the same way as he or she cannot phantom the effect that the source text had on its readership.

The validity of presupposition can be tagged as questionable in the best of cases and as rather improbable when applied to texts which are chronologically very distant or very remote from a cultural point of view. Robinson sums up this side of the debate when he states: “all talk of ‘equivalence’, ‘fidelity’, or even ‘reciprocity’ in the abstract is, and must remain, philosophically vague because the reality underlying it is a constantly shifting and therefore ultimately unsystematizable human response. Or rather, a series of human responses.” (1991: 21).

An important aspect remains and underlies every theoretical approach, however conflicting these approaches may be: translation is based on interpretation. The interpretive, or interpretative, approach was first developed by the ESIT group (the Paris School) in the 1960’s in the context of conference interpreting, and was afterwards extended to the translation of written non-literary texts. The emphasis was on the appropriation and reconstruction of the original meaning, so that it could be reformulated in such a way that is comprehensible to the audience of the target text: “Translation is thus not seen as a linear transcoding operation but rather as a dynamic process of comprehension and re-expression of ideas.” (Salama-Carr, 1998: 113).

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<sup>6</sup>Matthew is quoting here the words of Frances W. Newman, whose approach to the translation of Homer he criticises.

This approach, which stresses the importance of the transmission of sense or meaning and has a strong target-culture bias, has been criticised for excluding literary texts from its analysis. Yet in more recent times, this interpretive approach has been evoked in order to attack the notion of literary untranslatability, since “form is seen as a means rather than an end” (ibid.: 114). This *a priori* assumption is what holds the interpretive theoretical apparatus together. However, even if the post-modern contention that form *is* meaning is rejected, the aforementioned hypothesis can be disproved by the existence of texts (such as *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*) in which, it can be argued, form is an end in itself and underpins meaning.

As well as the ESIT group members, other scholars have used interpretation to formulate possible approaches to translation, albeit from a different angle. This is the case of Newmark, whose concept of interpretative translation is diametrically opposed to that of the Paris School: it “requires a semantic method of translation combined with a high explanatory power, *mainly in terms of the SL culture*, with only a side glance at the TL reader” (emphasis added; 1981: 35). It appears obvious that this approach is more sympathetic to the requirements of literary translation, especially if it is understood as a means of putting different cultures in touch and as a non-ethnocentric activity.

Regardless of the different angles from which this notion is focused, it is indubitable that interpretation lies at the core of every translation, whether oral or written, whether literary or non-literary. It is first carried out by the translator, from the source language (see below), and then, after the act of communication has taken place, by the target-text readership, from the target language. Interpretation is, therefore, a key notion in defining translation (see section 2).

It is a difficult task to define the general principles which should govern translation, since the translator’s aims vary according to the type of text which is being translated. As Hatim and Mason remark: “Translators’ choices are constrained above all by the ‘brief’ for the job which they have to perform, including the purpose and status of the translation, the likely readership and so on.” (1997: 11). It would seem, however, that certain essential elements should be borne in mind when carrying out a translation: comprehensibility, target readership and authorial intentionality.

### **1.1. Comprehensibility**

To make a text originally written in a language A comprehensible in a language B is, as stated above, the main purpose of translation. In order to achieve this purpose when dealing with a literary text, it is frequently not only the transformation of source language elements and their distribution in the written discourse as units and structures characteristic of the target language which has to be accomplished, but also the presentation of the source culture in terms which are understandable or identifiable for the members of the target culture.

It seems a logical assumption that the bigger the genetic gap between languages and the cultural distance between texts, the more difficult the translation process. Differences between verbal systems, syntactic distribution patterns and word formation and derivation can hinder, in direct proportion to their magnitude, the translator's task. Similarly, the different ways in which linguistic communities perceive the world and verbalise that perception can also become obstacles in translation.

In the case of a literary product, comprehensibility has to be combined with other requisites, which should not detract from it and from which it should not detract. These requisites derive from the nature and characteristics of the text. For the purpose of this study, it is assumed that the translation of a literary text generally poses problems which may derive from two sources:

- a.** The prevalence of the aesthetic function of language.
- b.** The content of the text itself, when this content is linked to culture-bound elements or shows a bias towards a specific readership.

The use of language and the presence of features which are characteristic of the source culture are two factors which determine the difference between the problems which arise from literary texts and those emanating from scientific texts (the nature of their respective subject matter being, perhaps, a more obvious difference). As far as the latter are concerned, the most important consideration for the translator is a precise transmission of the content, which, as a rule, will be expressed in a simple, straightforward manner. The formal features are dictated by the register of the text. It is possible to establish a univocal relation between the scientific registers of two languages.

On the other hand, a relation between the “literary registers” of two languages cannot be determined in the same manner. Moreover, the term *register* would appear to be inappropriate in the latter context because of its vagueness and lack of well-defined boundaries. Literary texts are characterised by an elaboration in the form and the content which arises from the author’s endeavour to present his work in a particular way and not in any other. “Literariness”, to use the terminology of the Russian Formalists, hinges on a number of unquantifiable variables which cannot be easily predicted or regulated. As Senn remarks, “Literature is what cannot be paraphrased” (in Snell-Hornby & Pöhl, 1989: 79).

## 1.2. The target readership

The second factor to be borne in mind when translating any text, namely the type of audience at which the target text is aimed, is, as follows from what has been expounded above, closely linked to the issue of comprehensibility. It could be argued that the relationship between every individual reader and a text is unique and different from that of any other reader. An analysis of this matter lies beyond the scope of the present project and, therefore, it will not be discussed here. However, the equivalent-effect principle, discussed above (see pp. 10-11) is a fundamental issue within the aesthetics of reception in the context of translation. The words of Hans Robert Jauss highlight the relevance of the aesthetics of reception from this point of view:

The relationship between literature and audience includes more than the facts that every work has its own specific, historically and sociologically determinable audience, that every writer is dependent on the milieu, views and ideology of his audience, and that literary success presupposes a book “which expresses what the group expects, a book which presents the group with its own image.” R. Escarpit, *Das Buch und der Leser: Entwurf einer Literatursoziologie* (Cologne & Opladen, 1961; first, expanded German version of *Sociologie de la littérature* [Paris, 1958]), p.116.) (1982: 26)

It is clear from the words above that each linguistic community has its own expectations about the literature which is produced within its cultural context. These expectations are bound to change when a literary piece is presented in a different language, for a different audience. Hence the importance of incorporating a concern for the target-text readership when translatability is being considered.

However, the notion that the success of a literary text presupposes that it has to “present the group with its own image”, when applied to target texts, is a polemical one on two accounts. Firstly, because it presumes that readers are not interested in the “other” (see Chapter 7 for a discussion of this issue); and secondly, because it encourages domesticating strategies, which, as mentioned above, can lead to a form of ethnocentric violence against the source culture. Robinson applies his theory of “somatic response” in order to highlight the role of translation in this process: “The disruptive effect of a translation is not on the original, but on the receptor’s response to the original: having read an appropriative translation, the receptor may come to feel different about the original.” (1991: 20). Acosta Gómez points at the reason why this can be the case: “La actividad del lector consiste [...] justamente en llenar lo que está vacío” (1989: 166). This “gap-filling” by the readers does have significant repercussions from the point of view of translation, since the target readership’s contribution to the translated text is likely to differ from that of the readers of the source text.

In theory, any text could have a potentially infinite number of readers, since anybody at any point in history after the production of the text can read it. However, a certain type of audience can be generally associated with each author (with the possible exception of the classics, which are often read compulsorily, rather than out of choice, and do therefore reach a wider section of the public). It can be the case that the target audience for the translated text differs from the original’s audience in its characteristics, and not just in that the former readership belongs to a different linguistic community. Translators therefore, have to observe this possibility when producing a target text. They will often be conditioned by the rules set out by the publishers who commission their work, which means that they will not always be able to apply their own criteria to the task of translation. In this respect, Bush notes that: “Conscious decisions which involve changing the translation are made at every stage, by editors and translators, in order to cater for the perceived needs of the receiving, dominant culture” (1998: 129).

In the framework of two relatively close contemporary cultural communities, such as any pair within the western world, the translation of a text should not, in principle, pose extreme translatability problems from a cultural point of view. In this respect, Lambert remarks: “contemporary mass culture has gradually redefined, even partly erased, the borderlines between source and target worlds while placing (literary)



translation within a multilateral rather than a bilateral frame of reference” (1998: 132). Advances in the technological era have certainly contributed, on the one hand, to a certain uniformity across cultural communities and, on the other, have ensured a wide diffusion of the elements which are peculiar to each community. As a result, these will be familiar or, at least, comprehensible, to a greater or lesser extent, to the members of foreign communities. Their degree of comprehensibility will frequently depend on the importance of these elements and on the proximity of the cultural communities in question.

The way in which cultural issues affect translatability in relation to the target text audience can be illustrated by the translation of sacred texts, such as the Bible, especially when the target is communities which have very little in common with the western world. The reason why the difficulties which may arise in relation to this kind of text are extreme (difficulties which have been studied in depth most notably by Eugene A. Nida, e.g. 1964), is that the act of translation is performed with a pragmatic goal in mind: the christianisation of the members of the target culture. Therefore, the accurate reproduction of a text which has sacred status in the source culture has to be conjugated with the reproduction of concepts and values which may be alien to the target culture. The difference with purely literary texts is that the latter pursue an aesthetic goal first and foremost.

There are conflicting views as to the role of target texts as links between the source culture and the target readership. As Evans remarks: “Conventionally, translated texts are believed to provide a transparent window onto the cultures they represent and to facilitate cross-cultural understanding” (1998: 153). This notion has been challenged by post-colonial critics: “Bhabha, Niranjana and Cheyfitz have exploded this Enlightenment ideology, forcing the reader to acknowledge the role of translated texts in imposing hegemonic cultural values and masking colonial violence.” (ibid.).

If it is assumed that the ideal aim of translation would be providing a non-hegemonic environment (from the point of view of culture) for target readers to “interact” with the source culture, then the principle which informs the task of the translator of a literary text (especially a culturally-loaded one) is to transmit as much information about the source culture as it may be possible, while retaining the comprehensibility of the target text. It seems clear that the more concessions are made in favour of the target culture (so as to enhance comprehensibility), the more restricted become the possibilities for the target text reader to acquire information on the source culture.

This last point leads to the need for an appraisal of the target-text readers. Three main considerations should be borne in mind, namely that:

- a. They will have certain expectations as to what a translation should be like.
- b. Their perception of the target text will be conditioned by their collective cultural background, as well as that of each individual reader.
- c. The collective cultural background of the target-text readership, along with everything it entails (shared information, familiarity with certain concepts or events and so on), will be different from that of the source-text readership.

It is often the case (more so in novels with the characteristics of *London Fields* than in novels like *Tiempo de silencio*) that the target-text readers approach foreign texts in translation with aims other than the acquisition of knowledge on cultures different from their own. Such readers may consider interferences from the translator in order to explain or comment on some aspect that has been obscured by the conversion of source text into target text (in the form of preambles or marginal notes, for instance) as being tedious or even redundant. Indeed, this is the code often imposed by editors and publishers: “Most commercial publishers anyway prefer not to have learned prefaces or pages awash with footnotes that ghettoize translation in restricted markets” (Bush, 1997: 14). If this is the publisher’s choice, elements whose comprehension may present some difficulty to target-text readers could be clarified within the text itself.

Scholars working in the field of translation have often approached the issue of the target-text readership from a standpoint that can be branded as unrealistic. If I. A. Richards and the New Critics had in mind an élite of “ideal readers”, whose existence is questionable in itself, the theories of authors as disparate as Pound or Derrida presume a highly aware reader, one who is interested in translation *per se*<sup>7</sup>. In the context of commercial translation ideal readers should be discounted, as should readers who see translation as a philosophical or ideological exercise<sup>8</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup>Richard’s theory will be examined in section 3 of this chapter, p. 38, and Derrida’s on pp. 48-50.

<sup>8</sup> Most of the latter will have access to both original texts, in any case.

### 1.3. Authorial intentionality

The notion of authorial intention is a controversial one both in the fields of literary criticism and translation. The controversy over this issue was fuelled in the 1950's by the publication of two essays entitled "The Intentional Fallacy" and "The Affective Fallacy", by Wimsatt and Beardsley. These essays challenge the relationship between authors and readers that had been traditionally held, in that they reject the notions of authorial control over the reader and the reader's affective response to the author. Robinson, however, interprets their work in the different light: "it was all an attempt to free readers from the ideosomatically programmed instrumentalism that said readers *must* humbly submit themselves to authorial intention and that writers *must* take care to affect their readers in morally acceptable ways." (1991: 118).

The debate has continued until the present. Whereas some see the research aimed at locating authorial intention as being "a futile quest" (Bush, 1997: 16), one that often responds "to conventional interpretations of an author's work" (ibid.: 14), others have defended this principle: "Van den Broeck [in 'The Concept of Equivalence in Translation Theory: Some Critical Reflections' 1978] concludes in agreement with Lefevere that the original author's intent and the original text's function can be determined and translated via a method of typologizing and topicalizing so that it will 'possess a literary value' equivalent to the source text and function accordingly" (in Gentzler, 1993: 98).

The term "intentionality" refers here to the elements of a work that have been "willed" by the author, those which are the fruit of a *conscious* decision, rather than an unconscious (or subconscious) one. Thus, intentionality is connected to the polemical concept of authorial intention, but it differs from it in that it makes reference to what appears on the page in its own right, and not necessarily to the author's mental processes that lead to the writing of certain textual elements and not others which can be seen as existing in a paradigmatic relationship with them. If, for example, an author chooses to give one of his/her characters a name whose meaning is relevant to the plot of the novel of which it is a part (such as "Guy" and "Hope" in *London Fields*, or "Pedro" and "Matías" in *Tiempo de silencio*), that relevance becomes obvious (the "intentionality" is clear) from the text itself, even though the author's "intention" in choosing that particular name may be open to debate. Intentionality is used here also in opposition to the more common sense of "intention" as a "goal" or "purpose" external to the work itself. It is not concerned with the desire of a given author to express him-



or herself, to achieve recognition (even immortality), become rich, or be controversial, to name just a few of the motives for which people embark on literary creation.

The translator perceives (and interprets) authorial intentionality in his or her own manner, and then chooses to manipulate the text in one way or another in order to present it to the target readership. As Bush states: "The literary translator creates a new pattern in a different language, based on personal readings, research and creativity. This new creation in turn becomes the basis for multiple readings and interpretations which will go beyond any intentions of the original author or translator." (1998: 129). It is at this stage that the reader as an active agent (see previous section) comes into play. This is consistent with the critiques of the equivalent effect / response principle mentioned above, and it does not presume that authorial *intention* can be safely identified or established. However, it does presuppose that an original intention (reflected in the text as intentionality) does exist, and that the translator will have a perception of it and it will react to it. Hence the assertion that perception of authorial intentionality is a safer principle for the translator (in order to observe it or to subvert it) than any striving to achieve an equivalent effect in the target text or to arouse an equivalent response in the target reader.

Granted that it is based on interpretation (as is every other aspect of translation), the perception of authorial intentionality does not necessarily always have to be based on research. As stated above, the purpose which lies behind what is on the page is frequently self-evident from the text (for example, in the case of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, social critique is apparent to any minimally aware reader) or from the author's own words (especially in the case of contemporary literature and certainly in the instance of Martin Amis and Martín-Santos). Even if the translator has to research the background of the work and/or the author, this effort will rarely be fruitless: the insights gained will be reflected in the production of the target text, which will, more likely than not, work to the advantage of its readers.

Although it is doubtful that the reader can recognise the author's intention (or the translator's, for that matter), it seems reasonable to assume that the translator can operate on the basis of authorial intentionality, whether to abide by it or to upset it. At the same time, it is clear that this basis rests on his/her own interpretation, as indicated above.

It can be argued that a translation is always dependent on the source text<sup>9</sup>: the former would not exist if the latter did not. Even “free” translations and translations which recreate the original (Ezra Pound’s “vorticean”<sup>10</sup> rendition of the *Iliad* in *The Cantos*, for instance) need the source text in order to modify it. In recent times, the critical work of translators such as Suzanne Jill Levine (in *The Subversive Scribe*, 1991; see pp. 213-14) has brought to the fore the existence of a translation of resistance (which is not the prerogative of feminist theory, but has also been approached by scholars working, for instance, on the post-colonial context), which deals with “antagonistic” texts in such a way that it provides a continuity for them in the target language, but also subverts them.

An issue as sensitive as the one outlined in the previous paragraph cannot but be controversial. For centuries, a trend has existed that maintains that translators should reflect authorial *intention* (in the established sense; see above, p. 18), both on the formal and content levels, as accurately as possible, in the target text. It may seem surprising that a “revisionist” of the role of translations and translators like Berman refers to “a scrupulous respect for the English text [Schlegel’s translation of Shakespeare], even in its ‘faults’ and ‘obscurities’, and the refusal to modify, embellish, and emend it, in particular where it shocks the contemporary sensibility” as “[d]emands which today may seem normal and elementary...” (1992: 131).

Many translators and theorists do not perceive such demands as “normal” nor “elementary”. Levine, for instance, as some others do, argues for a heightened status of the translator, who should interact with the original and challenge it. She was privileged to work on her translations in close contact with the original authors and thus become involved in a “creative collaboration” process. In a sense, all translation involves a “creative collaboration” with the source text, if not always with the original’s author. The fact that the translators’ main task is to make the source text comprehensible in the target language for the members of the target culture means that they must negotiate a number of elements which are culture-bound or tied to a specific feature of the source language (for instance, puns, rhymes and other similar features). The translator will have to make decisions as to whether translation losses are to be accepted or compensated. If the latter happens to be the favoured option, the translator

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<sup>9</sup> Deconstructionists, however, as explained in section 3 of this chapter (pp. 47-50) do not accept this dependence.

<sup>10</sup> Gentzler defines “vortex” in Pound’s understanding “as a cluster of words, a network of words, brought together in a radiant node” (1993: 20).

will have to determine how best to compensate for losses. This leads back to the notion of interpretation as an intrinsic component of translation, which has been explained above.

It is this area of interpretation which provides the space for the translator to “re-write” parts of the source text. However, the translator works ultimately within the bounds of authorial intentionality (as understood for the purposes of this study). Even Levine seems to acknowledge these bounds: the fact that she consulted with the authors whose works she translated makes her task less autonomous. Subvert she may do, but such subversion has the consent of the source-text writers, which makes it less subversive.

Regard for authorial intentionality also concerns the nature of the work which is being translated. It is generally assumed that if the original author conceived his/her work as serious literature, the features which make it so should not be trivialised in the elaboration of the target text. On the other hand, if the work which is being translated was conceived as light reading, the criteria seem to change. Di Jin goes as far as stating: “no translator would want to spend too much time on stuff which is clearly trash, though in demand” (in Cheng and Martin, 1992: 270). When approaching this kind of writing, the task of the translator will often be facilitated by the fact that the use of the language and the topics tackled in this kind of work (for example, sub-genres such as sentimental novelettes, pulp fiction or stereotypical airport books) do not reach the level of conscious elaboration or the depth which can be seen as characteristics of serious literature.

A complete reproduction in the target text of authorial intentionality as it appears in the source text will be, more often than not, an unrealisable ideal, even if the translator considers it desirable. Each literary work is a unique example of expression and its extraction from the linguistic and cultural context in which it was conceived and devised will result in a certain disfiguration. As a result, translators have to reject the idea of perfection and, to quote Robinson, “learn to live with compromise.” (1991: 119).

## 2. *The role of the translator*

Translators are, first and foremost, communicators, who belong to “a special category”, as Hatim and Mason argue: “[their] act of communication is conditioned by another, previous act and [their] reception of that previous act is intensive” (1997: 2). Communication can be constrained by different factors, though. Hatim and Mason mention the case of the translation of poetry, since poetry can be understood as “an act of self-expression”, which does not require an account of communication (ibid.). This can be extended, to a degree, to all forms of literary creation and it could be argued that there are issues which specifically affect the translator of literature (see Chapter 6), in spite of the existence of the “core of common concern” mentioned by Hatim and Mason (ibid.: 1).

Translators acts as intermediaries between the source text and the target text, which implies that they will have to mediate between the source language and the target language, as well as between the source culture and the target culture. It would not be possible to conceive the figure of the translator as a neutral conduit through which the transformation of the source text into the target text is produced. Duff goes as far as stating that “the translator who imposes the concepts of one language onto another is no longer moving freely from one world to another but instead creating a third world-- and a *third language*.” (1981: 10). Duff’s assertion emphasises the role of the translator as an active one, and one which is more than a bridge between languages and cultures: the translator seems to operate on an entirely new level of his or her own creation.

Some adjustments will necessarily have to be carried out in order to express a text conceived and created in a certain language, within a certain cultural frame in a different language, for readers who belong to a different cultural frame. It is widely accepted that such adjustments can be carried out consciously or instinctively. Berman attributes these modifications to a “cultural resistance”, which he considers unavoidable and which “produces a systematics of deformations that operates on the linguistic and literary levels, and that conditions the translator, whether he wants it or not, whether he knows it or not.” (1992: 5). It seems an over-generalisation to state that translators inevitably experience a certain “cultural resistance”, especially in the light of the works of many scholars and translators which advocate a conscious opposition to such resistance and a “decentering” of target readers in favour of the source culture values.

Nevertheless, “deformations”, to use Berman’s term, do occur in translation, whether they are consciously willed by the translator or whether they stem from subliminal processes. Even if a translator tries to be as objective as possible, some adjustments will involve some degree of decision-taking. The decisions that translators make will present the translators’ “stamp”, which will be given by their social and cultural context. As Bush observes, “the process [of translation] is a complicated mix of intuition, imagination and conscious choice involving thousands of decisions through which the translator is shaping and sustaining an interpretation” (1997: 14).

Robinson (1991) provides an insight into the conflict between thought and emotion in the translator’s work. His is a “physicalist” (as opposed to “mentalist”) approach to translation. He builds on the premise that translation theorists have dissociated cognitive processes and the practice of translation, and claim that they can help translators make consistent decisions, “the right decision in *every* situation” (1991: xi). On the other hand, translators think that they are doing as best they can in acting intuitively (ibid.: xi-xii). Robinson supports this view, since he argues for a “somatic” approach to translation. For him, the key is detheorisation. Thus, instinct is the true mark of a good translator: “A mediocre translator [...] will strive for logical consistency by suppressing somatic confusion; a great translator will not shrink from somatic confusion, somatic inconsistency, will not retreat into protective intellection, but will boldly flesh out the contradictory and conflicting body of his or her response with the overriding conviction that, if it all came from the guts, it is all of a piece.” (ibid.: 22).

The danger in this approach is that it lends itself to be perceived as normative and overly generalising: what works for a given translator may not work for another. It seems obvious that intuition and instinct play a vital role in translation. However, there is no guarantee that a translation that comes “from the guts” is “all of a piece”, nor that it is objectively “better” than one which has been the object of conscious reflection and/or research.

The dichotomy between theory and practice outlined above has been blamed by some other scholars as the source of many of the problems which affect translation. Berman claims that the consequences of translation being dealt with by non-translators (i.e. people who do not practise translation professionally) are threefold: that it “has remained an underground, hidden activity”, that it “has largely remained ‘unthought’”



and that “the analyses [...] inevitably contain numerous ‘blind spots’ and irrelevancies” (Berman 1992: 1).

Robinson claims that there exists “an unwritten rule” according to which theorists reject the physicalist route to translation because it does not fall in the realm of what can be rationalised and does not therefore lend itself to regulation: “Somatic response is too unpredictable to be ‘adequately’ theorized, that is, rigorously and universally systematized.” (ibid.: 18). His answer to such theorists (who, pronounces Robinson, are prey to their own fruitless perfectionism) is unequivocal: “I firmly believe that the competent translator does not need theory.”<sup>11</sup> (ibid.: 122).

It is indeed translation theory that has caused rifts among translators and critics alike over the centuries. Since the birth of translation, its practitioners have been confronted with issues such as source-text / target-text orientation, naturalising / foreignising strategies, or fidelity / treason, and they have solved the dilemmas posed by these in their own individual (perhaps “somatic”) way, subject to various degrees of conscious reflection on the different matters arising. Theory of translation has spelled out such matters and their implications, frequently pulling in opposite directions, and generating critical thought on decisions that translators make in their everyday work, attaching labels to them that brand them right or wrong.

It has been traditionally considered that the ideal translation would be one which did not appear to be a translation, i.e. a target text which read as if it were a source text. The concepts of transparency and naturalness are, therefore, paramount for supporters of this theory. Also, for the same reason, many modern scholars do not favour obvious “intrusions” in the target text, such as footnotes, which break the continuity of the text and may be distracting for the reader.

However, in more recent times, the contribution of disciplines such as anthropology, sociology or discourse analysis to studies on translation has favoured the formulation of new theoretical principles in this respect. Lawrence Venuti, in his historical overview of translation, *The Translator's Invisibility* (1995), criticises the traditional approach, which advocates naturalness of expression in the target text, on the grounds

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<sup>11</sup> It may seem ironic that someone who does not believe in the need for theory in translation has produced a theoretical book on the subject. Robinson justifies this in the following manner: “I want to give competent translators theoretical tools with which to defend their best work against the carping of perfectionist critics, and to help translators who feel susceptible to perfectionist guilt to fight back.” (1991: 123)

that it aims at making the translator “invisible” and that it implies a form of cultural imperialism (see p. 9). In Venuti’s opinion, trying to hide or disguise the involvement of a translator in the production of the target text belittles his/her role and his/her profession. The cultural implications of naturalising translation and Venuti’s proposal for foreignising translation will be looked at in the chapter dealing with culture-bound elements (Chapter 7).

Whether a translator opts for a naturalising or a foreignising translation, this is usually an informed choice. This leads to the issue of the qualities that a translator needs in order to perform his/her task in a satisfactory manner. As well as possessing a high degree of competence in the source language<sup>12</sup> and the target language, it is commonly believed that a translator should ideally be versed in the subject matter of the source text and have a deep knowledge of the source culture. Some scholars also point out the necessity for the existence of a certain empathy between the translator and the original author, as explained in the paragraph below.

Dryden states in his preface to the *Life of Lucian* in 1711 that a translator “ought to possess himself entirely and perfectly comprehend the genius and sense of the author, the nature of the subject, and the terms of the art of subject treated of. And then he will express himself as justly, and with as much life, as if he wrote an original; whereas he who copies word for word loses all the spirit in the tedious transfusion.” (in Bassnett, 1993: 149). This current of thought continued through the years, as proven by the fact that, over two centuries later, Vladimir Nabokov, in *The Art of Translation* (1941), states: “the translator must have the gift of mimicry, the capacity to act the author’s part, impersonating his demeanor, speech, and ways, with the utmost verisimilitude” (in Nida, 1964: 151). However, while the principle that there should be an identification of the translator with the author leads Dryden to disparage literalism in translation, Nabokov, in the foreword to *Eugene Onegin*, claims that “The clumsiest literal translation is a thousand times more useful than the prettiest paraphrase” (in Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 127)<sup>13</sup>.

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<sup>12</sup> Robinson, however, differs: “it may even be argued that self-projection into the body of a native speaker is a more crucial requirement for the good translator than a comprehensive cognitive understanding of the SL” (1991: 17).

<sup>13</sup> On the other hand, Octavio Paz claimed that literal translation “is not translation. It is a mechanism, a string of words that helps us read the text in its original language. It is a glossary rather than a translation, which is always a literary activity.” (in Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 154).

Clearly, the task of the translator requires a flair for written expression, too. In the specific case of literary translation, this flair has to combine with a talent for reproducing in the target language the formal characteristics of the source text. Literary sensitivity is not necessarily associated with an ability to translate, but it is also required.

Some critics maintain that a certain scholarly knowledge is necessary in translation (see universalist theories, p. 32): "For any language, a rigorous correspondence with another language can be postulated, but on a *virtual* level. To develop these potentialities (which vary from language to language) is the task of translation *which thereby proceeds toward the discovery of the 'kinship' of languages*. This task could not be simply artistic; it supposes an extensive knowledge of the entire diachronic and synchronic space of the target language." (Berman: 1992: 189-90).

In an era when most translations are commercial products, it seems unreasonable to expect a combination of all the virtues and skills mentioned above in a single person. In fact, some go as far as to state that some decisions are made for a translator, rather than by him or herself, given the constraints imposed by the prevalent culture surrounding the publication of translations: "A translation may be presented explicitly as a translation, in which case it is visible, or it may be disguised as an original, which explains why the majority of readers remain unaware of the foreign origins of some literary texts. [...] it is far more common for a translation to be disguised as an original than it is for an original text to be presented as a translation, particularly in the world of mass literature and in the business world" (Lambert 1998: 130). Bush also comments: "Contracts usually include some line about 'providing a language that is faithful to the original' and commit the translator to the correction of proofs" (1998: 128).

Translators often work to tight deadlines and, more often than not, they will carry out their commission with pragmatic rather than theoretical considerations in mind. The conflict between the theory and the results of the practice of translation can be attributed to a lack of differentiation by scholars between the purpose served by the target texts. As Susan Bassnett remarks:

The confusion caused by use of the same terminology to describe translation as a high status literary activity, translation as a pedagogic instrument and translation as hack work for the mass market [which started in the seventeenth century] is still with us today, and helps to explain some of the conflicting feelings about the whole activity of translation. (1993: 150)



In practice, the translator's task goes beyond translation itself, i.e. beyond the process which reproduces the source text in the target language: carrying out the process of translation entails a series of interferences between the functions which are peculiar to the profession of translator and other activities, which, strictly speaking, fall within the sphere of literary criticism. This alludes to the interpretation of the source text, which the translator, as a reader, will have to perform. In this way, the original text will appear as target text only under the influence of the translator, who may not even be aware of his/her interference with the original. Thus, the translator can colour the source text with his or her own ideology, which can result in a distortion of the original message. This is the case, for instance, with Edward Gibbon's translation of Suetonius' *Lives of the Caesars*. Gibbons, led by his strong Christian convictions and influenced by the prevailing conventions in eighteenth century Europe, placed moral judgements on issues concerning the sexual behaviour of the Roman Emperors which were presented in a neutral fashion in the source text.

It can be argued that the essential component of every translation is interpretation (see pp. 19 and 23). As mentioned above, before the translator becomes a producer, or a creator, he or she is a receiver. Thus, the translator has to "interpret" the source text in order to re-encode it in the shape of a target text. An incorrect or imprecise interpretation is acceptable within literary criticism to a certain extent. This is a subjective discipline, external to the text itself, which means that it cannot alter or disfigure it (although it can certainly affect the perception of the text by the public). Nevertheless, the two disciplines are not as discrete as they may immediately appear: authors such as Ezra Pound practised "criticism by translation", whereas the Romantics in Germany practised "translation by criticism"<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, in some cases it is the translator and not the author who determines the perception of a given literary work in a given cultural context. Perhaps the best documented example is that of the *Arabian Nights* (see footnote 32). The French translation (1704-1708), by the "discoverer" of the collection, Antoine Galland, and the English versions by Edward Lane (in the 1840's) and Sir Richard Burton (1850), played an essential role in shaping the Western conception of the Oriental "Other". Burton, in particular, produced a heavily annotated translation which meant, effectively, a censorship of the original guided by his own prejudices. In the early 1900's, Andrew Lang changed again the public perception of the *Arabian Nights* by targeting a young readership with

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<sup>14</sup> For a reflection on the relationship between translation and criticism, with special mention of the views of the Romantics, see Berman 1992.

his version of the tales. At present, the notion that these were intended as children's stories, which could not be further removed from the truth, prevails in the Western psyche.

However, the role of translators as *ad hoc* critics is not sufficiently recognised. Some scholars have criticised the endeavours to provide systematic answers to the dilemmas which translators have to face on a day-to-day basis, and the refusal to accept the translators' competence to make decisions of their own according to each individual case. For instance, there is a debate on whether, alongside its virtues, the "defects" of the novel (i.e. those elements which may be considered deficient, distasteful or unpleasant; see pp. 57-58) should also be reflected in the target text. Robinson's ironic reply to such deliberations is forthright: "Translators languish for want of clear arbitrations on pressing issues like whether (and when) one is allowed to improve on a badly written SL text: there *has* to be a standardized rule on things like this! We cannot have translators just doing whatever they think right!" (1991: 122).

It seems logical to assume that a translator could never reflect in the target text the entirety of the content of a novel in the form in which it appears in the source text, even if he or she was so inclined. Besides, the relations established between that novel and other texts, especially those which belong to the same cultural context, can easily become lost in translation. Thus, it can be concluded that it is not merely the text in itself which poses difficulties for the translator, as far as both its content and its form are concerned: the existence of a literary tradition in which the source text is inserted, which can facilitate the translator's job, can also contribute to making translation a far from easy task.

The concept of interrelation between texts within a more comprehensive framework of cultural links is explored in depth by Polysystem Theory, which builds on the Russian Formalists' concept of system. It was formulated in the early 1970's by the Tel Aviv scholar Itamar Even-Zohar and expanded by Gideon Toury. Even-Zohar defined polysystem as a "system of systems", which is hierarchical and dynamic, and he applied his theory mainly to literary translation, discussing the status and the importance of the role of target texts in a given polysystem. Although it would seem that translated literature tends to occupy a peripheral (in Even-Zohar's terminology) position within a polysystem, this is not always the case. The importance of translated literature depends on how well established source-language literature is within its own polysystem, and also on the evolution of the polysystem itself.

Translated literature will either conform to the norms and conventions of the literature which is native to the polysystem or will introduce an innovative component into it. This leads to the conclusion that the practice of translation is conditioned within each culture by the position that target texts hold in that particular culture, i.e. it is "an activity dependent on the relations within a certain cultural system" (Even-Zohar 1990: 51). As a result, translation becomes the manipulation of literature.

Even-Zohar and Toury thus articulated the interdependence of texts in terms of translation studies: translations never function as totally autonomous texts. In the same way as an author never works in a vacuum, neither does a translator. He or she will be conditioned by other texts, both original and translated, within the polysystem in which he or she works.

The interdependence of texts has also been explored from a purely discursive angle. Intertextuality is defined by Hatim and Mason as "the way we relate textual occurrences to each other and recognise them as signs which evoke whole areas of our previous textual experience" (1990: 120). Intertextuality can therefore work to the advantage of, for instance, the translator of a novel from English into Spanish, and *vice versa*, since readers in both cultures will easily identify the genre as one that forms part of their literary tradition. The intertextual relation between the source and target texts will be straightforward. On the more specific level of intertextual occurrences, however, problems may arise in translation. To quote Hatim and Mason again, "...citations, references, etc., will be brought into a text for some reason. The motivated nature of this intertextual relationship may be explained in terms of such matters as text function or overall communicative purpose. That is, one does more than just quote Shakespeare. One uses the Shakespearean utterance for one's purposes." (ibid.: 128). For an elaboration on this issue, see Chapter 6.

From what has been expounded above, it follows that a professional, when undertaking the translation of a literary text, should discriminate between what is essential and what is not and between what is allowed and what is not, for the transformation of the source text into a target text. The translator will often make this distinction in a subconscious manner, which, in principle, does not affect the quality of his/her performance (especially if s/he can be considered to be bilingual and bicultural, to use what Lodge [1984: 20] called "a rather ugly phrase"). Often, however, the translator may not be aware of certain aspects which are important within

the source text, since s/he will not share the same experiences or have the same cultural background.<sup>15</sup> As Berman proclaims: “translation incessantly runs into limits: the difficulties encountered are of the order of the translator’s limitations, of his language and his culture, of the complexity of the solutions to be found in order to render this or that text...” (1992: 134). On the other hand, from a more practical approach, few would disagree with Robinson when he says that: “Dialogically speaking, the key is not perfection but success: *what works* [...] in context, in the specific situation in which a translation is needed or offered.” (1991: 119)

The translators of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* are confronted by very elaborate texts, in which even the minutest detail is deliberate. Although the plots of the novels are simple, an understanding of the texts hinges, to a certain extent, on a series of cultural and linguistic factors which pose translatability problems. Such translatability problems may affect the content and/or the style of the novels. Rey’s words are very illuminating as to the complexities of Martín-Santos’ novel: “para leer *Tiempo de silencio* [...] hace falta tocar varias teclas, literarias y extraliterarias” (1977: 2). The same could be said about *London Fields*.

It can be argued that Martin Amis seems to write primarily for an anglophone readership and, more specifically, for a British one. The main difficulty would be to reproduce in the target text all those elements whose meaning, both denotative and connotative, would be self-evident for source culture readers and, at the same time, may obscure the understanding of the text for target culture readers. Also, the translator faces a hyper-elaborate text, an example of highly self-conscious writing, in which the manipulation of the source language is incessant. Mirroring this in the target language is not an easy task in itself, which gives an idea of the translatability problems it can give rise to when combined with the thematic components mentioned in the previous paragraph.

Martín-Santos, in his own words, wanted to construct a mythology for the benefit of society<sup>16</sup>. The following statement by Roland Barthes seems particularly appropriate in this instance: “What is characteristic of myth? To transform a meaning into form. In

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<sup>15</sup> Vladimir Nabokov asserted: “One of the main troubles with would-be translators is their ignorance.” (in Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 137).

<sup>16</sup> When asked by Winecoff-Díaz (1968: 237) how he understood the social role of the novelist, Martín-Santos replied: “Su función es la que llamo desacralizadora-sacrogenética: Desacralizadora - destruye mediante una crítica aguda de lo injusto. Sacrogenética - al mismo tiempo *colabora a la edificación de los nuevos mitos que pasarán a formar las Sagradas Escrituras del mañana.*” (Emphasis added).



other words, myth is always a language robbery.” (1973: 131). Martín-Santos perpetrated such “robbery” by presenting meaning as form. The author’s message in *Tiempo de silencio* is a call for awareness and a protest. When transposed to another historical moment, due to the passage of time, it loses part of its meaning when the circumstances which inspired its writing have changed (the myth has to be understood in its own context), even if it retains its testimonial value. When expressed in a different language, the loss is even greater, since it is addressing an audience in terms whose referents are neither part of the target culture nor part of the historical conscience of the readers.

If we take the assumption that translation is transformation (see p. 45 for an outline of Derrida’s views in this respect), and apply it to *Tiempo de silencio*, the question that arises is that of the feasibility of the transformation. Is it possible to “reencode” that idea by means of a different language? Can it be elaborated using another linguistic system? It would appear that this is not the case, since the concepts put forward in the novel are so deeply embedded in its formal characteristics that the transformation of language involves the transformation of the idea into something so different that the appropriateness of the term translation could be called into question. *Tiempo de silencio* is a very complex text in its formal characteristics. Keeping up with the intensity of the writing, with the nuances of a prose which is foreignising at times and always convoluted, is one of the challenges that this novel poses for the translator.

As far as the target readerships of these two novels are concerned, it would be too risky to formulate a hypothesis as to their profile. At the same time, a safe presumption to make would be that, in the case of culturally-loaded texts like *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, the target text will reach a smaller number of readers than the source text will, possibly belonging to different social groups. As has been mentioned earlier, the relationship between authors and their readers is different from that between translators and theirs.

### ***3. The question of the translatability of texts***

The difficulty in the process of translation lies not only in the text that is being translated, but also in its links with the cultural frame to which it belongs, and the web-like connections established between this and other texts. It is possible that a translated text can be satisfactory from a linguistic point of view and still be deficient

from a cultural point of view (i.e. the cultural points of reference which are obvious from the source text are missing from the target text).

There are essentially two points of view from which translatability has been traditionally approached: the universalist one and the monadist one<sup>17</sup>. Supporters of the former approach claim that the existence of linguistic universals ensure translatability. Those who endorse the latter approach maintain that each linguistic community interprets reality in its own particular way and this jeopardises translatability. The polarisation of thought which these two opposed approaches imply has not always been manifest in translation scholarship. Some theorists have oscillated between the extremes represented by universalism and monadism and some have attempted to combine aspects of both perspectives. There is a third, more recent approach to translatability: that of the Deconstructionists, who question the notion of translation as transfer of meaning.

Up to the eighteenth century there seemed to exist a certain tacit consensus as to the interchangeability of linguistic codes. However, Leibniz's philosophical approach to language began to point in a different direction. As early as 1697, in Steiner's words (1992: 78), "Leibniz put forward the all-important suggestion that language is not the vehicle of thought but its determining medium". Many translators and theorists would adhere to monadist postulates fostered by this approach in centuries to come. According to Steiner, "[f]rom the 1750's onward, the problem of 'l'influence réciproque du langage sur les opinions et des opinions sur le langage' was very much in vogue" (ibid.: 79). Universalist approaches, on the other hand, were also common currency<sup>18</sup>.

The issue of the translatability of texts started to be considered as such in the nineteenth century, when the birth of a linguistic science encouraged the posing of theoretical questions of this nature. Until then, scholars had focused their attention mainly on translation methodology and the principles of translation. The development of theories on the nature of language and communication provided a growing medium for an analysis of the possibility or impossibility of elaborating concepts in a language different from that in which they were conceived. Linguists such as von Humboldt,

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<sup>17</sup> In "La miseria y el esplendor de la traducción" (1939), the Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset placed the issue of untranslatability in a wider philosophical frame, which expands beyond linguistic considerations. For Ortega, all human actions and endeavours are essentially utopian. Therefore, the act of translating is also a utopian task (see Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 93-112).

<sup>18</sup> See Steiner, 1992: 76-82, for an overview of this matter.



Schlegel, Schleiermacher and Schadewaldt considered each language immeasurable in its own individuality. Hence the translation theories of that age, which signalled two possible, incompatible paths for the translator: one of them leading towards the source language/source culture and the other one, towards the target language/target culture. The links between both were, to an extent, ignored, and no compromise solution, no “middle way” contemplated. Von Humboldt’s words, from a letter to A.W. Schlegel, dated July 23, 1796, exemplify this approach to translation:

All translation seems to me simply an attempt to solve an impossible task. Every translator is doomed to be done in by one of two stumbling blocks: he will either stay too close to the original, at the cost of taste and the language of his nation, or he will adhere too closely to the characteristics peculiar to his nation, at the cost of the original. The medium between the two is not only difficult, but downright impossible. (in Wilss, 1982: 35)

Nevertheless, his own experience as a translator made von Humboldt perceive the need for translation, which he described as “one of the most necessary tasks of any literature” (in Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 56). According to his hypothesis, the structural differences which exist between languages are no obstacle for translation. The reason that von Humboldt proposes to explain this is that each linguistic community has a potential of expression which can generate resources for verbalising every extra-linguistic area, even those which go beyond its own social and cultural experience. To apparent untranslatability, which results from structural incompatibilities between languages, one can respond with potential translatability, with the possibility of expressing the concepts of human experience in any human language (see Wilss, 1982: 35 ff.).

Leo Weisgerber anticipated the hypothesis of the existence of a *sprachliche Zwischenwelt*, a linguistic mediary world, which controls thought. He proposed the theory<sup>19</sup> that “our understanding is under the spell of the language which it utilizes” (in Steiner, 1992: 90). This view was also sustained in the early 1930’s by Jost Trier. Edward Sapir and Benjamin Lee Whorf, his disciple at Yale, also exploited this hypothesis in America, where anthropological study of native American cultures had opened new paths to linguistics. Sapir asserted in 1929 that “the ‘real world’ is to a large extent unconsciously built up on the language habits of the group. [...] The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world

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<sup>19</sup>Weisgerber developed this theory in a series of books published between 1929 and 1950 (see Steiner, 1992: 90).

with different labels attached.” (in Steiner, 1992: 91). This hypothesis would be elaborated, through the 1930’s and 1940’s, into a theory according to which the fact that each linguistic community has its own perception of the world, which differs from that of other linguistic communities, implies the existence of different worlds determined by language<sup>20</sup>.

What has become known as the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis is generally not applied in its strongest form, since this would imply the impossibility of effective communication between the members of different linguistic communities. However, a “moderate” version of this hypothesis has been justified through numerous examples extracted from different (often remote) languages, in relation to, for instance, the semantic fields of colour, family and weather, or the tense configuration of verbal systems.

This different perception and mental organisation of reality can be used to explain the existence of certain “gaps” between languages, which can turn translation into a very difficult process. Translators have to be aware of these gaps, in order to produce a satisfactory target text. Acceptance of the hypothesis that each language conditions the way in which its speakers perceive and interpret the world, presupposes:

- a. That there will be terms which are specific to each linguistic community.
- b. That there will be concepts which are common to two or more linguistic communities and nevertheless have different connotations in each of them.
- c. That each linguistic community structures reality in a different way, according to its own linguistic codes.

All these factors have to be borne in mind when approaching the translation of any text. They can give rise to translatability problems, but the fact that they apply to very specific items which can be distinctly outlined implies that they cannot support a hypothesis of total untranslatability. That is, the impossibility of translating a text does not follow from the recognition of these circumstances.

In 1923, Walter Benjamin published his German translation of Baudelaire’s *Tableaux Parisiens*. In the introduction to this book, an essay entitled “The Task of the

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<sup>20</sup>Steiner (1992: 81) sees an antecedent of Sapir/Whorf’s linguistic relativism in J.G. Hamann’s *Philologische Einfälle und Zweifel*, published in 1772.

Translator”, Benjamin outlines his theory on the translatability of texts. For Benjamin, “the law governing the translation: its translatability” (1992: 71) has to be found in the original. He considers the translatability of a given work as having “a dual meaning. Either: Will an adequate translator ever be found among the totality of its readers? Or, more pertinently: Does its nature lend itself to translation and [...] call for it? [...] Only superficial thinking will deny the independent meaning of the latter and declare both questions to be of equal significance” (ibid.). In Benjamin’s view, the translatability of a text is independent of whether or not such a text can be translated. This is the reason why he asserts: “Translatability is an essential quality of certain works, which is not to say that it is essential that they be translated; it means rather that a specific significance inherent in the original manifests itself in its translatability.” (ibid.).

The question of the significance of a text is central to Benjamin’s theory. This significance transcends both the content and the form of the text:

The transfer can never be total, but what reaches this region is that element in a translation which goes beyond transmittal of subject matter. This nucleus is best defined as the element that does not lend itself to translation. Even when all the surface content has been extracted and transmitted, the primary concern of the genuine translator remains elusive. Unlike the words of the original, it is not translatable, because the relationship between content and language is quite different in the original and the translation. (ibid.: 76)

The elusiveness of the true significance of a text in Benjamin’s theory does not derive from incompatibility between languages. On the contrary, he elaborates on the “kinship of languages”, which he sees founded on that very same significance: “Languages are not strangers to one another, but are, a priori and apart from all historical relationships, interrelated in what they want to express.” (ibid.: 73). It is in translation that we can catch a glimpse of “pure language”<sup>21</sup>: “to turn the symbolizing into the symbolized, to regain pure language fully formed in the linguistic flux, is the tremendous and only capacity of translation. [...] For Benjamin, it is the task of the translator to release in his own language that pure language which is under the spell of another, to liberate the language imprisoned in a work in his re-creation of that work.” (ibid.: 80).

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<sup>21</sup> For an elaboration on this concept, see Bush, 1998: 194-96.

Benjamin's theory remains very much a philosophical exercise. On occasion, he uses theology to justify a paradoxical remark: "One might, for example, speak of an unforgettable life or moment even if all men had forgotten it. If the nature of such a life or moment required that it be unforgotten, that predicate would not imply a falsehood but merely a claim not fulfilled by men, and probably also a reference to a realm in which it *is* fulfilled: God's remembrance." (ibid.: 71). Other paradoxes are not elaborated upon: "The lower the quality and distinction of its [the original's] language, the larger the extent to which it is information, the less fertile a field it is for its translation, until the utter preponderance of content, far from being the lever for a translation of distinctive mode, renders it impossible. The higher the level of a work, the more it does remain translatable even if its meaning is touched upon only fleetingly." (ibid.: 81).

Some of the concepts he presents are vague. For instance, although he defines: "Translation is a mode" (ibid.: 71), he does not make it clear what is meant by this assertion. The mission of the translator is, according to Benjamin, to echo the original (ibid.: 77) in a new language. The idea of an "echo" is as nebulous as that of the purity of language: "In translation the original rises into a higher and purer linguistic air, as it were" (ibid.: 75).

Also, Benjamin deliberately sought to dissociate translations (and literature generally) from their readerships: "In the appreciation of a work of art or an art form, consideration of the receiver never proves fruitful." (ibid.: 70)<sup>22</sup>. In doing so, he chose to ignore the consideration that a translator, as a receiver of the original and the link between this and the translated text, deserves. Also, that translations which are produced for commercial purposes (as most translations of literary works are) are biased by the expectations of their audiences, who often look more for the likeness to the original which Benjamin claims would make translation impossible (ibid.: 73), than for a reflection of pure language and a significance which may link all languages.

In a series of reading workshops which started at Harvard in the late 1920's, I. A. Richards laid the foundations for his theory of translating, based on his belief that there is a "proper" way of decoding a text and recoding it in a different language<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>22</sup> This opinion stands in sharp contrast with the beliefs that would result in the formalisation of a theory of reception later in the century (see pp. 14-17).

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Benjamin, 1992: 70: "the concept of an 'ideal' receiver is detrimental in the theoretical consideration of art". Benjamin had thus anticipated and rejected one of the principles on which Richards based his theory.

Thus, as Gentzler remarks, Richards “maintained that the literary scholar could develop rules of solving a communication problem, arrive at a perfect understanding, and correctly reformulate that particular message.” (1993: 17). The most basic flaw in Richard’s theory, leaving aside the questionability of concepts such as “perfect” and “correctly”, is that it can be easily contradicted from real-life experience: presented with the same text, different translators would, more likely than not, produce dissimilar “recodings”.

Frederic Will shared much of the conceptual basis of the New Criticism pioneered by I. A. Richards. Nevertheless, his experience as a translator made him depart from the deceptive straightforwardness which derived from Richard’s thought. In *Literature Inside Out* (1966), he appeared to support a moderate version of the Sapir-Whorf theory: “Reality can only be learned [...] through the names we give it, and so, to a certain degree, language is the creator of reality” (in Gentzler, 1993: 29). However, in *The Knife and the Stone* (1973), he turns to the élitist notions which had been championed by Richards in order to elaborate his literary theory: “The inter-translatability of languages is the firmest testing ground, and demonstration ground, for the existence of a single ideal body of literature.” (in *ibid.*: 31). Thus, as Gentzler observes, Will was caught in a paradox: “That which makes it possible for Will (universals/deep structures) also makes it impossible (the specific moment/surface structures).” (*ibid.*: 36). In other words, although Will believed in the existence of linguistic universals, he saw their actual manifestations as being distinctive of each linguistic community. Therefore, even if common structures underlie all human languages, their surface counterparts are so different in each of those languages that translation may become an impossible task.

Some theorists accepted the existence of incompatibilities between languages, but did not deny the concept of translatability itself. On the contrary, alternative forms of translation to a literal decoding-recoding process were called for<sup>24</sup>. When in 1967 C. L. Wren gave the Presidential Address of the Modern Humanities Research Association entitled “The Idea of Comparative Literature”, he suggested that:

Clearly fundamental differences in patterns of thinking among peoples must impose relatively narrow limits. An African language, for example, is incompatible with a European one for joint approaches in Comparative Literature study. Even Sanskrit,

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<sup>24</sup>This approach is controversial, in that it implied a hierarchy of languages and, by extension, of cultures. See Otto Kade’s views (p. 47) for an elaboration of this issue.



though itself an Indo-European language along with its Indian ramifications, presents a pattern of thought which renders any sort of literal translation of very limited value. (in Bassnett, 1993: 19-20)

The belief in linguistic universals, a notion which underlies the views of all those who, from the eighteenth century onwards, adhered to a general translatability approach to literature, would become the basis for Noam Chomsky's generative transformational grammar. However, Chomsky himself warned scholars against the applicability of his theory in the field of translation:

The existence of deep-seated formal universals [...] implies that all languages are cut to the same pattern, but does not imply that there is any point by point correspondence between particular languages. It does not, for example, imply that there must be some reasonable procedure for translating between languages. (*Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, 1965; in Gentzler, 1993: 50)

Many, however, ignored Chomsky's cautionary words. From the 1960's onwards, supporters of the universal translatability notion used the theory formulated in *Aspects* to give their views scientific foundation. Some of the most prominent twentieth-century linguists (Jakobson, Bausch, Hauge, Nida<sup>25</sup> and Ivir, amongst others) accept the view that, in principle, everything can be expressed in any language. Those who support this view argue that the translatability of a text is guaranteed by the existence of universal syntactic and semantic categories and endorsed by the logic of experience. In Nida's words: "that which unites mankind is greater than that which divides"<sup>26</sup> (1964: 2).

Other scholars, however, do not adhere to this theory of universal translatability. André Martinet, for example, propounds in *Eléments de Linguistique Générale* (1960) that human experience is incommunicable, because it is unique. The reason he adduces is that each language structures the data acquired through experience in its own

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<sup>25</sup> Eugene A. Nida claims that his own postulate of language universals, on which he bases his translation theory, preceded Chomsky's. In an article entitled "A Framework for the Analysis and Evaluation of Theories of Translation" (1976), he states: "Before the formulation of generative-transformation grammar by Chomsky Nida had already adopted an essentially deep-structure approach to certain problems of exegesis." (in Gentzler, 1993: 44).

<sup>26</sup> It is worth noting here that Nida's assertion, stemming from his humanitarian (in the sense that it seeks to promote the welfare of mankind), evangelical philosophy, encompasses both the linguistic and the cultural aspects of translation. Thus, he adds a cultural perspective to Chomsky's theory of linguistic universals.



individual way and, in doing so, he takes on board the implications of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis.

J. C. Catford proposed a method in order to assess the translatability of texts, based on the degree to which a given text can be contextualised in the target language, taking into consideration all linguistic and extralinguistic factors. He places the absolute limits to translatability on two axes (1965: chap. 7):

a. Translation between media is impossible (the oral form of a text cannot be translated into the written form of a given text, and *vice versa*).

b. Translation between what he calls the “medium-levels” (phonology and graphology) and the grammatical and lexical levels is impossible (source language phonology cannot be translated into target language grammar, and so on).

Thus, according to Catford, in order for textual equivalence to exist, source language and target language elements must have some essential features in common. His premises can, however, be contradicted by practical evidence. It is conceivable for a translator to put in written form his/her translation of an oral text. Also, phonological devices of the source text (such as rhyme, for example), can be compensated in the target text by means of syntactical elements (some form of iteration), thus “translating” the rhythm of the text.

Some scholars working in the field of translation assume, implicitly or explicitly, the existence of a basic division within untranslatability: that between linguistic untranslatability and cultural untranslatability. This means that a dichotomy can be established between the translation difficulties that have their origin in the gap between source language and target language, and those which arise from the gap between source culture and target culture. The theories of these scholars will be explained in the paragraphs below.

Catford pioneered in British Translation Studies a rationalisation of this issue. He considered that the validity of the above differentiation between linguistic and cultural untranslatability is questionable. He proposes the following definitions in *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*:

**Linguistic untranslatability:** “failure to find a TL [target language] equivalent is due entirely to differences between the source *language* and the target *language*” (Catford, 1965: 98). Some examples of this type of untranslatability would be ambiguity, plays on words, oligosemy, etc.

**Cultural untranslatability** arises “when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the SL [source language] text, is completely absent from the culture of which the TL is a part” (ibid.: 99). For instance, the names of some institutions, clothes, foods and abstract concepts, amongst others.

According to Catford’s view of the question, the dichotomy mentioned above would not exist if it could be demonstrated that all instances of cultural untranslatability respond to “the impossibility of finding an equivalent collocation in the TL” (ibid.: 101). This impossibility is, in his opinion, a case of linguistic untranslatability. More specifically, it is a case of “collocational untranslatability”, which Catford defines as: “untranslatability arising from the fact that any possible TL near-equivalent of a given SL lexical item has a low probability of collocation with TL equivalents of items in the SL text which collocate normally with the given SL item” (ibid.).

The practical implications of reducing cultural untranslatability to a form of linguistic untranslatability would greatly affect the field of machine translation, since a computer could hypothetically be programmed to recognise such anomalous collocations. However, it seems that there is more to cultural untranslatability than just a matter of collocation. The question of how the target audience may interpret cultural issues in the source text also forms part of the considerations which have to be borne in mind when approaching the question of translatability.

Anton Popovic also outlines a differentiation between linguistic and cultural untranslatability in *A Dictionary for the Analysis of Literary Translation* (1976). He defines the former as: “A situation in which the linguistic elements of the original cannot be replaced adequately in structural, linear, functional or semantic terms in consequence of a lack of denotation or connotation” (in Bassnett-McGuire, 1980: 34).

This categorisation is very similar to the one proposed by Catford a decade earlier. However, the definition of cultural untranslatability which Popovic proposes is substantially different from that of Catford: “A situation where the relation of expressing the meaning, i.e. the relation between the creative subject and its linguistic

expression in the original, does not find an adequate linguistic expression in the translation" (ibid.). Catford's initial approach when studying the issue of cultural untranslatability shows a fundamentally linguistic nature, whereas Popovic's, as Basnett-McGuire indicates, implies a theory of literary communication.

Nida and Charles R. Taber assert: "Anything that can be said in one language can be said in another, unless the form is an essential element of the message" (1969: 4), thus disregarding the possibility of the existence of cultural untranslatability, and highlighting the difficulties posed by the prevalence of the aesthetic function of language in a given text (see p. 13). This assertion is particularly relevant to the translation of literary texts, since the aesthetic function of language is of prime importance in this kind of text and, as a result, formal considerations are essential. Other scholars, on the other hand, claim that the external boundaries of translatability can be determined by the genre of the text. George Steiner states: "Not everything can be translated. Theology and gnosis posit an upper limit" (1992: 249)<sup>27</sup>; and "Nonsense rhymes, poésie concrète, glossolalia are untranslatable because they are lexically non-communicative or deliberately insignificant"<sup>28</sup> (ibid.: 296).

Since the question of translatability *versus* untranslatability began to be considered, the need has been felt by some scholars to produce a taxonomy of text types according to their degree of translatability. In the article "Invariantz und Pragmatik", published in 1973, Neubert established a classification in four different categories (in Wilss, 1982: 114):

- a. Texts which are exclusively source-language oriented: Relatively untranslatable.
- b. Texts which are mainly source-language oriented (literary texts, for example): Partially translatable.
- c. Texts which are both source-language and target-language oriented (as the texts written in language for specific purposes): Optimum translatability<sup>29</sup>.

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<sup>27</sup>Cf. Benjamin (1992: 82): "Where a text is identical with truth or dogma, where it is supposed to be 'the true language' in all its literalness and without the mediation of meaning, this text is unconditionally translatable."

<sup>28</sup>Steiner emphasises the role of the meaning of such texts. However, if their formal characteristics cannot be reproduced in the target language, what arises would be a case of linguistic untranslatability.

<sup>29</sup>Neubert defines "optimum translatability" as the degree which is obtained when denotative translation equivalence is the essential qualitative reference frame.

d. Texts which are mainly or solely target-language oriented (propaganda, for instance): Optimum translatability.

The validity of this classification is arguable, since the limits established between the different degrees of translatability are vague (for example, no distinction is made between literary sub-genres) and arbitrary (the translator can use paraphrase in order to make the degree of translatability of a source-language oriented text identical to the one of a source and/or target-language oriented text).

Besides, the correlation which Neubert established between a text and its degree of translatability, on the one hand, and its level of translation equivalence (a problematic concept in itself), on the other, is not always straightforward, since within a text characterised by a theoretical optimum translatability there can be found relatively untranslatable passages.

Georges Mounin, for his part, states: “...la théorie de l'intraduisibilité est construite toute entière sur des exceptions” (in Wilss, 1982: 41). However, at the same time that he maintains, along the same lines as Neubert did, that the notion of untranslatability is relative, he expresses his conviction that translation is only possible to an extent, within certain parameters. In order to define the limits of translatability, translation failure has to be measured in a given text and a given pair of languages (see Mounin, 1977: 312). On the other hand, Mounin considers that there are more pressing, tangible problems which the translator has to face. According to his view, more attention should be devoted to solving these problems than to speculating on the translatability or untranslatability of the texts.

Other authors accept a universal translatability hypothesis, with certain reservations. Wilss states: “To agree with the principles that texts are translatable is not to postulate the unlimited translatability of all texts in general” (Wilss, 1982: 47). He also quotes Weisgerber's elaboration on this issue: “...the serious translator believes, in effect, that a perfect translation from one language to another is not possible” (in Wilss, 1982: 41), but then presents a more radical principle: “everything can be expressed in every language”, a principle which, he claims, is “widespread in modern linguistics” (Wilss, 1982: 48). For him:

The translatability of a text is [...] guaranteed by the existence of universal categories in syntax, semantic, and the (natural) logic of experience. Should a translation nevertheless fail to measure up to the original in terms of quality, the reason will (normally) be not an



insufficiency of syntactic and lexical inventories in that particular TL [target language], but rather the limited ability of the translator in regard to text analysis. (1982: 49)

On the other hand, the inter-relatedness of language and culture and its implications for translation still form part of the theories of some scholars, like Winter, who accepts the impossibility of a perfect translation, in a principle reminiscent of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis: "If an interpretation of reality as formulated in language A does not exist in any isolation, but only as part of the total system of this language, then its correlative in language B cannot be isolated from the overall system of B, which must be different from that of A" (in Larose, 1989: 107).

In the late 1960's, a new current of thought, Deconstructionism, emerged in France. It would revolutionise translation theory in years to come. From the late 1970's onwards, Andrew Benjamin, Michel Foucault, Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida, most significantly, called for a new approach to translation. It is claimed that the translation of a text affects the way in which that text is perceived and, therefore, there is a "re-writing" of the original through translation<sup>30</sup>. Target texts cease to be considered as subsidiaries of the original, which, in turn, becomes dependent on translation. After all, following Venuti's interpretation of poststructuralist philosophy, "What makes the foreign text original is that it is deemed worthy of translation" (1992: 7). This is to say, the act of translating constitutes a validation of the text that is being translated. Originality ceases to be a chronological concept (i.e. it is not about which text was produced first) and becomes a qualitative matter (i.e. it refers to the nature of the text which was conceived first)<sup>31</sup>. The question of authorship itself is challenged and translation is seen as a process in which language is constantly modifying the source text<sup>32</sup>. In *Language, Counter memory, Practice* (1977), Foucault outlines the

<sup>30</sup> This view highlights both the importance of the role of the translator as a mediator (see section 2) and that of the reader as an active contributor to the text (see section 1.2).

<sup>31</sup> A similar standpoint was adopted by the Mexican poet Octavio Paz in *Traducción: Literatura y Literalidad* (1971). In Irene del Corral's translation: "No text can be completely original because language itself, in its very essence, is already a translation--first from the nonverbal world, and then, because each sign and each phrase is a translation of another sign, another phrase. However, the inverse of this reasoning is also entirely valid. All texts are originals because each translation has its own distinctive character. Up to a point, each translation is a creation and thus constitutes a unique text." (in Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 154).

<sup>32</sup> For a fictionalisation of a similar postulate, which precedes formal Deconstructionist theory, see *Pierre Menard, autor de El Quijote*, by Jorge Luis Borges, originally published in *Sur*, n. 56, Buenos Aires, 05/1939 (pp. 7-16). Menard undertook the task of re-writing *El Quijote* word by word, without, nevertheless copying the novel: "Su admirable ambición era producir unas líneas que coincidieran -palabra por palabra y línea por línea- con las de Miguel Cervantes." (1970: 55). This apparently paradoxical and pointless endeavour is revealed by Borges to be meaningful: "el fragmentario Quijote de Menard es más sutil que el de Cervantes" (ibid. : 57). According to the author:

importance of this diachronic approach, recommending an analysis of texts within their historical situation (see Gentzler, 1993: 150).

Jacques Derrida rejects the notion of the existence of kernels or deep structures, to follow Chomsky's terminology, which underlie language. Thus, language itself acquires a new identity of its own, and not merely as a form of representing meaning. Gentzler observes that, for deconstructionists, "In translation, what is visible is language referring not to things, but to language itself" (1993: 147). This concept is fundamental for postmodern theory and also for postmodern literature, of which the autonomy and self-reflectiveness of language is very much a defining feature. But this approach is not entirely new. In "The Task of the Translator", Walter Benjamin had anticipated the idea that language does not refer to any objective reality: "In this pure language -which no longer means or expresses anything but is a expressionless and creative Word, that which is meant in all languages- all information, all sense, and all intention finally encounter a stratum in which they are destined to be extinguished" (1992: 80). As Bassnett remarks: "Benjamin's essay was rediscovered by translation theorists in the 1980s<sup>33</sup>, and has become one of the most significant texts of post-modern translation theory." (1993: 151).

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Es una revelación cotejar el don Quijote de Menard con el de Cervantes. Éste, por ejemplo, escribió (Don Quijote, primera parte, noveno capítulo):

...la verdad, cuya madre es la historia, émula del tiempo, depósito de las acciones, testigo de lo pasado, ejemplo y aviso de lo presente, advertencia de lo porvenir.

Redactada en el siglo diecisiete, redactada por el "ingenio lego" Cervantes, esa enumeración es un mero elogio retórico de la historia. Menard, en cambio, escribe:

...la verdad, cuya madre es la historia, émula del tiempo, depósito de las acciones, testigo de lo pasado, ejemplo y aviso de lo presente, advertencia de lo porvenir.

La historia, *madre* de la verdad; la idea es asombrosa. [...] También es vívido el contraste de los estilos. El estilo arcaizante de Menard -extranjero al fin- adolece de alguna afectación. No así el del precursor, que maneja con desenfado el español corriente de su época. (ibid.: 59)

In "Los traductores de las 1001 Noches" (in *Historia de la eternidad*, first published in 1936) Borges had anticipated the notion of translators altering future perceptions of the source text: "Galland establece un canon, incorporando historias que hará indispensables el tiempo y que los traductores venideros -sus enemigos- no se atreverán a omitir" (1953: 100). He also emphasised the influence of literary tradition in the reception and interpretation of a translated text: "las versiones de Burton y de Mardrus, y aun la de Galland, sólo se dejan concebir después de una literatura. Cualesquiera sus lacras o sus méritos, esas obras características presuponen un rico proceso anterior." (ibid: 131).

<sup>33</sup>In fact, the "rediscovery" of this essay had happened before the 1980's. Gentzler (1993: 174) states: "The first deconstructionist reading of Benjamin's essay can probably be located in Carol Jacobs' 1975 essay 'The Monstrosity of Translation'".



For Derrida, “translatability as transfer of meaning is the very thesis of philosophy.” (Niranjana: 1992: 55). He criticises the approaches to translation which are based on the existence of a meaning which transcends language, because “the theme of a transcendental signified took place within the horizon of an absolute pure, transparent, and unequivocal translatability” (1981: 20). Derrida proposes a new approach to this issue:

In the limits to which it is possible, or at least *appears* possible, translation practises the difference between signified and signifier. But if this difference is never pure, no more so is translation, and for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of *transformation*: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another.” (ibid.)

Derrida is aware of the losses which are bound to occur when presenting the source text in the target language. For this reason, “With each naming gesture, Derrida suggests a footnote, a note in the margin, or a preface also is in order to retrieve those subtle differing supplementary meanings and tangential notes lost in the process of transcription.” (Gentzler, 1993: 146)<sup>34</sup>. Derrida’s line of thought leads to the questioning of the very concept from which his theory starts: what is translation? It can be argued that translatability does not equal the possibility of *explaining* a text<sup>35</sup>. For instance, an untranslatable joke can be explained. Besides, as mentioned earlier, translations are not usually academic exercises. They are produced for a readership that has certain expectations about what the target text should look like. In the case of commercial translation especially, notes and prefaces tend not to be welcomed by the readers, if nothing else, because they are distracting.

Deconstructionism is often associated to other currents of thought which revolutionised Western thought in the 1960’s, such as feminism. Amongst the reflective practitioners in the field of feminist translation, one of the most prominent figures is Suzanne Jill Levine. In her book *The Subversive Scribe* (1991), she establishes a comparison between the source and target texts in terms of what could be interpreted as the limits of translatability: “Inevitably the original’s effortlessness, its natural tie to a language, can never be replaced.” (ibid.: 26). Elsewhere in the same

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<sup>34</sup> Nabokov, before Derrida, supported this view, too: “I want translations with copious footnotes, footnotes reaching up like skyscrapers to the top of this or that page so as to leave only the gleam of one textual line between commentary and eternity. I want such footnotes and the absolute literal sense, with no emasculation and no padding” (in Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 143).

<sup>35</sup> Vladimir Nabokov took a radical stand on this issue in the foreword to his translation of *Eugene Onegin*: “The term ‘literal translation’ is tautological since anything but that is not truly a translation but an imitation, an adaptation or a parody.” (in Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 134).

work, she specifies where some of those limits lay in the case of the works that she translated. For instance, she writes: "The special and private associations as well as standard societal implications of words in one language seem [...] untranslatable" (ibid.: 1); and further along, she states: "names –particularly names that 'signify'– dramatize the impossibility yet necessity of translation." (ibid.: 18). Another example of untranslatable textual elements that she mentions is wordplays, which in Cabrera Infante's *Tres Tristes Tigres* ring "a local, untranslatable bell for Cuban ears only" (ibid.: 23). Thus, Levine does not argue against untranslatability. On the contrary, she presents her own experiences as a professional translator who has to confront untranslatability in such a way that translation is made possible.

Any text can be explained, and yet translation is concerned with issues that go beyond an elucidation of the source text in a foreign language. Berman remarks: "Translation cannot be defined solely in terms of communication, of the transmission of messages, or extended *rewording*. Nor is translation a purely literary/esthetical activity" (1992: 5). If translation aims at providing a reading experience comparable to that of the source text (see pp. 6-7), it can be argued that an explanation or a gloss would fail to meet the expectations of the target-text readers.

None of the theories proposed until now appears to be fully satisfactory. The paradox in the debate of translatability vs. untranslatability was summed up by Berman as follows:

Here [in everyday language], translation concerns as well the *manifestation of something*, as the *interpretation of something*, the possibility to *formulate, or reformulate, something in an other* [sic] way. Roman Jakobson would call this intratranslation. [...] The problem of the theory of generalized translatability is always this: It tends to efface all differences. In other respects, it is true that generalized translatability corresponds to something real. And that any theory on difference encounters the reverse problem: What about the ontological site of the transformable, the convertible? (1992: 85)

Nida has expressed repeatedly the need for a better differentiation in this, since he claims that no valid conclusion can be reached starting from a simplistic, ideologically motivated system. There still remain, nevertheless, some political considerations

which are borne in mind by some theoreticians. Otto Kade's words, quoted below, illustrate the main focus of this trend of thought<sup>36</sup>:

The conception of untranslatability has its roots in idealistic philosophy. The denial of translatability presupposes a subjective ranking of the various languages [...]. Since a language cannot be thought of as existing independently of those who speak it, [...] we find ourselves on the surest road to a reactionary racist ideology. (in Wilss, 1982: 46)

According to this, postulating the untranslatability of a text implies sustaining the view that some languages are not apt for expressing certain aspects of human experience<sup>37</sup>. A hierarchical classification of languages according to the complexity of their resources or their sophistication would entail an implicit hierarchical organisation of the speakers of the different languages. As a result, such classification would foster the notion that the superiority or inferiority of people lies with their ethnic or national characteristics, to which languages are associated.

This proposition seems too extreme, since the acceptance of differences between linguistic communities does not necessarily presuppose the establishment of a hierarchical classification. Each community perceives the world and expresses its experience of it in a different way, according to its needs. Considering what is different as inferior is, certainly, a reactionary stand. Yet there is no direct or necessary relation between the concepts of difference, on the one hand, and inferiority or superiority, on the other.

Since the early attempts at establishing a scientific theory of the problem, translation theory has covered much ground and progressed considerably. At the same time, it has become notably diversified, benefiting from notions which derive from various knowledge areas, which are, in principle, external and yet related to translation as a discipline (for example, sociology, psychology, applied linguistics and narratology). As a result of all this, the debate on (un)translatability has been relegated to a marginal position within what is probably the most influential current of thought in translation in

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<sup>36</sup> A different political stand is the one held by those who subscribe the views of Lawrence Venuti, who states that "any attempt to make translation visible today is a political gesture" (1992: 10). This point of view, although different in its conception to Kade's, is, however, implicitly related to the issue of ranking of languages. According to Venuti, the language spoken by a culturally dominant community can be used in translation as part of an act of imperialism against the language spoken by a less prominent community.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Nida and Taber, 1969: 4 (see page 41).

recent times<sup>38</sup>, Translation Studies. In the words of Bassnett-McGuire (1980: 66), “with the shift of emphasis away from the formal processes of translation, the notion of untranslatability would lead on to the exaggerated emphasis on technical accuracy and resultant pedantry of later nineteenth-century translating”.

At present, there is a tendency to presuppose that most texts are translatable, however different the understanding of the nature of translation may be amongst scholars<sup>39</sup>. This can lead to the conclusion that the issue of untranslatability is nowadays being considered and assessed under different names, different “tags”. Studies on cultural issues in translation and on the difficulties of cross-cultural communication<sup>40</sup> have flourished in recent times. The titles of some of them speak for themselves: *Translation, History and Culture* (1990), edited by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere; *Translation/History/Culture. A Source Book* (1992), edited by André Lefevere; or *Communication Across Cultures* (1997), by Basil Hatim. As Gentzler remarks, “Bassnett and Lefevere argue that Translation Studies is taking an historic ‘Cultural Turn’ as it propels itself into the nineties.” (1993: 185). A clear sign of this is that, in the essay entitled “Linguistic Transcoding or Cultural Transfer? A Critique of Translation Theory in Germany”, Snell-Hornby proposes that translation scholars move from “text” to “culture” as a translation unit (in Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990: 5).

The notion of taking culture as a translation unit is very attractive. However, whereas it is easy to comprehend the translation of a text as a self-contained process, it is possible to argue that culture cannot be translated. Culture can be explained or interpreted in its specific manifestations, but it would appear that “translation” is too restrictive a concept to be applied in this case. As will be seen in the chapters that follow, that which is understood by the readers of the source text merely because they belong to the source culture is what can make a text relatively untranslatable: it will not

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<sup>38</sup>The wide diffusion of the works of Itamar Even-Zohar, Gideon Toury, Susan Bassnett, Theo Hermans and André Lefevere, amongst others, and their academic prestige seems to justify this assertion.

<sup>39</sup>One of the most provocative approaches is that advocated by two followers of the Brazilian Antropofagia Movement, Haroldo and Augusto de Campos, who also cultivate poésie concrète. The Antropofagia movement, pioneered by Oswald de Andrade, when concerned with translation, interprets the process as a form of cultural cannibalism. As Else Vieira puts it, “the ‘receiving’ culture will interpenetrate and transform the original one [...] translation is no longer a one-way flow from the source to the target culture, but a two-way transcultural exercise” (in Bassnett, 1993: 155).

<sup>40</sup>The difficulties of cross-cultural communication are magnified in translation, given that the author of the original text, in producing that text, was communicating with his/her readership within the parameters of one shared language. Cross-cultural communication by means of translation is normally carried out through an intermediary (the translator) and, therefore, subject to alterations which, in general, are alien to the author, the primary communicator.

be grasped by the readers of the target text merely by their belonging to a different cultural and/or linguistic community.

To summarise, the consensus seems to be that absolute untranslatability, whether linguistic or cultural, does not exist. Berman's words sum up this standpoint when he establishes a distance between an idealistic notion of translatability and the prevalent conception of the same: within the Romantic perspective, translatability means that "The work is that linguistic production which *calls* for translation as a destiny of its own." (Berman 1992: 126). This has to be distinguished from "common translatability or the one linguistics seeks to define. The latter is a reality. Languages are translatable, even though the space of translatability is loaded with the untranslatable." (ibid.).

With the expansion in the concept of translation in the twentieth century, the debate on translatability *versus* untranslatability loses part of its validity, since the various strategies that translators can resort to when confronted with a gap between two languages or two cultures are acknowledged as sound translation mechanisms. At the same time, it is assumed that the perfect translation, i.e. one which does not entail any losses from the original is unattainable, especially when dealing with literary translation. A practical approach to translation must accept that, since not everything that appears in the source text can be reproduced in the target text, an evaluation of potential losses has to be carried out. To quote Senn's words, "That nothing is negligible [...] is not a principle that could possibly survive in translation. Priorities must be set." (in Snell-Hornby & Pöhl, 1989: 79).

To accept the notion of untranslatability, as many translators and scholars do (see above), does not imply a denial of the possibility of translation. Such a stand would be unsustainable in the light of overwhelming evidence to the contrary: every day thousands of texts are translated throughout the world, and intercultural relations would have never been possible without the work of translators. Accepting the existence of untranslatability, however, means to recognise the Other as an entity in its own right, that expresses itself in its own terms, which can be understood and explained (otherwise, human communication would not be viable), but not invariably enunciated in our own language. It means to appreciate foreign cultures as they are, rather than making them fit into moulds cast according to our own belief system and our own values. Translation is eminently practicable, but, as a discipline, it has limits. In a literary work, these limits can be imposed by language and/or by culture. The chapters that follow will examine the components of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de*



*silencio* which could potentially fall beyond those boundaries, as well as the strategies that a translator can apply in order to bypass untranslatability so that translation becomes a reality.

#### **4. The specific case of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio***

This study will be carried out on the premises of a restricted theory of translatability within a descriptive (as opposed to prescriptive) approach (see Toury 1980, 1995). It is assumed that certain features or characteristics of the source texts examined here ought to remain unaltered in the target text in order to allow for their reconstruction in the target language. A comparative analysis will have to be made in the framework of the source *text* and the target *language*, because “what is identified as a problem vis-à-vis one pair of texts will not necessarily emerge as a problem at all, much less so a problem of the same kind and magnitude, within another comparative study, *even if that other study only involves a different translation of the same text.*” (emphasis added; Toury 1995: 78). Since, as Coseriu states, “the objects of translation are not language-specific but textual” (in Pym and Turk 1998: 275), the specific problems affecting *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* will be examined in the context of those two texts, rather than purely in terms of the pair of languages involved (English – Spanish).

Therefore, reverting to Benjamin’s contention that the translatability of a text lies within the text itself, the analysis will be done on the premise that untranslatability may also lie within the text itself, independently of the ability of the translator. If, as Pym and Turk claim, “the principle of translatability may be advocated by making our starting point the analysis of texts or speech (*parole*) rather than language systems (*langues*)” (1998: 274), untranslatability can also be assessed using the same criterion.

The notions of translatability and untranslatability will be focused from a source-text, source-culture oriented perspective. This is what some scholars see as the basis of “ideal” translation models (such as those of Robyns and Iser; see Evans 1998: 153). Target texts are understood as reflections of the source-culture in terms that are linguistically accessible to target-culture readers. Most of the critical literature which opposes this principle emerged around the post-colonial context. Since Britain and Spain have never co-existed in a colonial relationship, the accusations of acculturation and ethnocentric violence, which are very real in the case of other literary systems,



could not have the same socio-political relevance. (For an elaboration on this issue, see Chapter 7). However, it is worth pointing out that the relative position of either cultural system is not balanced: whereas Britain has been traditionally perceived in Spain as being an advanced country, Spain's reputation in Britain (especially until the late 1970's) has been that of a backward, primitive country.

In this respect, some claim that translation arouses resistances, and that these resistances "constitute an essential chapter of traductology. Originally, they seem to be of a religious and cultural order. At a first level, they are ordered around untranslatability as a value. What is essential in a text is not translatable or, supposing it is, should not be translated." (Berman 1992: 187). Untranslatability is not understood here as a value. Quite the opposite. Translation should ideally be not about resisting the foreign, but valuing it in its uniqueness: the target-text readers would need to move towards "the Other" to understand it.

Berman claims that the sacralisation of one's mother tongue could be "the source of [...] all the 'problems' of translation." (1992: 4). Yet even when what is held "sacred" is the source-culture, translation problems can arise. Even in a foreignising translation (if it is, indeed, a translation and not constant recurrence to exoticisms in the target text) there will be aspects of the source text which will become lost in translation, because of their very nature.

Whereas translatability can be defined in terms both of losses and of gains, untranslatability can only be defined in terms of losses. These losses can affect the text both on the levels of the transmission of content and the reproduction of form. The reproduction of form tends to stay in the background, however, when the issue of translatability is considered, as follows from this definition: "Translatability is mostly understood as the capacity for some kind of meaning to be transferred from one language to another without undergoing radical change." (Pym and Turk 1998: 273).

The reason for this could be that linguistic untranslatability, as mentioned above (see p. 41), has been traditionally perceived as the only real instance of untranslatability, and it is the transmission of meaning, rather than the transmission of forms, that can theoretically be achieved in translation. Some authors support this claim on the universality of meaning, as opposed to the specificity of form: "essential to translation would be the transmission of 'meaning,' that is, the universal content of any text [...]" Every time translation rebels against the narrowing of this operation and pretends to be



a transmission of *forms*, of *signifiers*, resistances proliferate.” (Berman 1992: 187). Given the formal characteristics of *London Field* and *Tiempo de silencio*, the scope of this study cannot be restricted to the transmissibility of supposedly universal meanings, since form is part of the meaning and, as such, deserves consideration.

Pym and Turk state: “Translatability, inevitably coupled with untranslatability, is an operative concept in the sense that it actively helps structure an entire field of decisions and principles.” (1998: 273). These decisions and principles can affect the text as a whole (for instance, whether the translator favours a foreignising or a naturalising bias) and also specific occurrences within the text. A number of strategies which operate on the localised or the global levels is available to the translator (see pp. 216-19). From this follows that translation is possible, “even though the space of translatability is loaded with the untranslatable” (Berman 1992: 126). Untranslatability is, then, not always unavoidable: translators can circumvent it by using strategies which allow them to *translate*.

The history of translated literature is full of examples of “difficult” fiction that has been translated into many, often very distant, languages. Translators utilise different strategies to cope with the problems that the transmission of the source text in the target language poses. Lawrence Venuti’s foreignising strategies in his translation of Italian literature into English are well known<sup>41</sup>. Suzanne Jill Levine’s “subversive translations” of Latin American writers will be examined in more detail in Chapter 7. Chang opted for cultural adaptation strategies (addition, deletion, substitution) when translating English language works into Chinese (see Chang 1996: 11-13). The Spanish translator of *Trainspotting* (by Irvine Welsh, 1993) had to carry out an unavoidable task of acculturation, in that he had to substitute Spanish slang for the original dialect. The list could go on indefinitely. Given the scope of this work, it would not be feasible to analyse individual strategies for fictional works that present translation difficulties. Yet it is undeniable that translators through the ages have rendered untranslatability in the source text into acceptable target text solutions.

In the specific cases of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, the translatability of both novels is ratified by the fact that they have been, indeed, translated. However, the questions raised by the nature of the translatability of the novels are still pertinent, especially as far as the differentiation between linguistic and cultural translatability is

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<sup>41</sup> See, for instance, his translation of De Angelis’s poem *Somiglianze* (in 1995: 287-88), which he quotes as an example of an English version which “refuses fluency” (ibid.: 290).

concerned. It seems that the borders between these two areas are not as clearly defined as the theories of some scholars have implied. It is a difficult task to break the links between them both, since a people's culture is so intimately linked to its language, and *vice versa*, that the interference between them is constant in literary works, and certainly in both *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*<sup>42</sup>.

*London Fields*, as a contemporary novel, presents a series of advantages for the translator, who will not have to span the chronological distance, which is something that the translation of older texts would require. As far as the content is concerned, the target readership will probably be familiar with the contemporary themes of the text and the system of values portrayed in it. On the other hand, *London Fields*' contemporary condition also implies an obstacle for the translation of the novel. The appearance of newly-created terms, along with colloquialisms and trademarks, which are often absent from dictionaries, renders the translator's task difficult. The translator will have to be familiar both with other strictly contemporary texts and modes of discourse, as well as with the evolution of cultural trends in the anglophone world, in order to accomplish a satisfactory target text.

To the obstacles mentioned above, others are added. One of the most striking is the author's literary style, with its constant changes in linguistic register and omnipresent rhetorical devices (onomatopoeias, plays on words, alliterations, etc.) which are difficult to reproduce in the target language. Also, another factor that has to be considered is the important role that intertextuality plays in *London Fields*. This novel, like most of Martin Amis' literary compositions, shows a strong bias towards the source culture. It seems as if the author makes a conscious effort to address a restricted group of readers with his fiction. Restrictions are imposed on potential readers by virtue of their social and cultural identity (which, incidentally, has given rise to accusations of snobbery by some critics; see p. 201), as well as their belonging to a given linguistic community.

It can be argued that the translation of *London Fields* into Spanish is intrinsically challenging, given the characteristics of the source text, independently of the impact which it may have on the history of literature. The published translator's challenge lay essentially with the novel itself, since the published translation was carried out shortly

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<sup>42</sup>This leads back to the question of culture as a unit of translation. Essential though it is to bear in mind the cultural frame in which these novels are inserted, as far as their translation is concerned, the issue of whether culture can be "translated" analysed above still remains.

after the original appeared. Were another translated version of *London Fields* to be produced now, the same would apply, given the prevailing modernity of the text. However, allowances have to be made for the possibility that the hypothetical second translator could take advantage of the different studies on *London Fields* published in the interim and the constant renovation of dictionaries.

Maybe the approach to the novel, by readers and translators alike, will change in the future. Yet it would be pointless here to speculate on possible future perceptions of this book, its transcendence or lack thereof. As Hewson and Martin state, “there can be no definitive translation (except those pronounced to be so for normative reasons), since the Cultural Equation relating texts across the boundaries of language is constantly changing” (1991: 32).

*Tiempo de silencio*, although a modern text, does not possess the contemporary quality which characterises *London Fields*. This novel was first published, after having been subject to censorship, in 1962. Its definitive edition did not appear in Spanish until 1980. In the years which separate the publication of *Tiempo de silencio* and the present, this novel has achieved the status of a “classic” in Spanish and has been practically forgotten in its English version: the only published translation of *Tiempo de silencio* into English (George Leeson, *Time of Silence*; John Calder: 1965; reprinted by Columbia University Press in 1989), has achieved very low sales.

The subject matter of *Tiempo de silencio* was not strictly contemporary even on publication. It is a post-Civil War book that portrays Spanish society in the late 1940’s, when “the hunger years” were only just over. It was first published in a country ruled by a military dictatorship, in which repression and censorship would condition and control every artistic manifestation. The critical portrayal of Spanish society, reflected in the microcosm of the capital, Madrid, was welcomed by the intellectuals and opposition groups of the time. Critical opinion was almost unanimous in its description of *Tiempo de silencio* as a fundamental work in Spanish literature, an opinion which has prevailed through the years.

Martín-Santos wanted to raise an awareness of the social injustice and the impoverishment (both material and spiritual) which Franco’s totalitarian regime brought upon Spain. Since the Civil War was seen by many outside Spain as a crusade against fascism, the episode became idealised and mythologised throughout the western world. This circumstance, together with the international boycott imposed on



Franco's regime, made the aftermath of the conflict a highly fashionable subject. Hence the many translations which followed the publication of *Tiempo de silencio*: according to the notes in the nineteenth edition of the novel, published by Seix Barral in May 1982, the book "Ha sido traducido al inglés, al francés, al italiano, al alemán, al holandés, al portugués, al sueco, al checo, al rumano, al finlandés, al danés y al polaco."

Six decades after the Spanish Civil War, the topic has lost much of its appeal for the general public outwith Spain. It has, however, retained most of its poignancy in the collective memory of the home country, especially since the advent of a democratic system favoured, or, at least, made possible, an open debate on the conflict. This alone would explain the reason why *Tiempo de silencio* remains a key text in Spanish literature, whereas it has been forgotten in translation. However, there is another factor that has to be considered. *Tiempo de silencio* was saluted as a breakthrough in the Spanish novel, and it is still regarded as such. Literature in English had experienced a more radical renovation long before the appearance of this novel. Therefore, the appeal of its novelty, of its innovativeness, would necessarily be less in a language which had given the world James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922)<sup>43</sup>.

All these factors concern the reader's perception and response (whether it stems from the author's or the translator's version), i.e. extra-textual considerations, more than they concern textual translatability. However, many elements in *Tiempo de silencio* and *London Fields* present translation problems which arise from the novels themselves, rather than from the interpretation by the target-text audience. Untranslatability can only be understood in terms of losses, as far as the form and/or the content are concerned. The chapters that follow will analyse those elements which may lead to translation loss, in order to assess their impact on the translatability of the two texts.

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<sup>43</sup>This novel is probably the most visible literary influence in *Tiempo de silencio*.



## Chapter 2: Style

[...] art does not improve or sicken or recover or die: it merely provides the imagination with the model that each age requires. (Martin Amis; in *The New Review*, vol. 5 n. 1, Summer 1978; p. 18).

### 1. Introduction

It has been said that “it requires a poet to translate another poet”<sup>44</sup> (Matthiessen, 1931: 5), but this does not necessarily imply that only a novelist can translate a novel. One thing, however, is clear: the target text has to be elaborated as a literary text. Its elaboration requires considerable sensibility towards the source language and target language alike. However, according to Snell-Hornby (1988: 119), translators have received little assistance from translation scholars on this matter: “Style is nominally an important factor in translation, but there are few satisfactory discussions of its role within translation theory.”

In the specific case of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, the translator is faced with the arduous tasks of **a)** reproducing in Spanish Martin Amis’ extraordinary verbosity, and in English that of Martín-Santos, and **b)** reflecting their obsession with language as an entity in its own right, and not only as the vehicle for literary expression. An added difficulty is that many passages in the novels are tinged with a certain poetic quality, as a result of the usage of rhetorical devices that are usually reserved for texts written in verse. Translators find themselves in the position of having to identify target language devices that fulfil a similar function, in order to preserve that poetic quality.

Sometimes, the translator might feel the need to alter, to “improve” on the source text (see p. 28). Such impulse must be especially strong when confronted with a novel like *London Fields*, about which Julian Symons said in *The London Review of Books* (28 September 1989): “Amis’s refusal to write a commonplace sentence, his eagerness for

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<sup>44</sup> Matthiessen echoes here an old idea, which Walter Benjamin incorporates in “The Task of the Translator”: “But do we not generally regard as the essential substance of a literary work what it contains in addition to information [...] the unfathomable, the mysterious, the ‘poetic’, something that a translator can reproduce only if he is also a poet?” (1992: 70).

out-of-the-way sentences, can lead to some pretty bad writing". Leeson, *Tiempo de silencio*'s only published translator, actually yielded to this temptation: he "edited" the text, in order, it seems, to abate the rhythm of the prose (see pp. 84-85).

Peter Newmark opposes the view that the mission of translators involves mirroring even the "bad writing" in the novels. He claims that, "If the writing is poor, it is normally his [the translator's] duty to improve it" (1981: 6). For him, the criterion which should inform the decision as to what constitutes good writing is meaning. Incidentally, according to Newmark, this decision is not subjective, but does contain a "subjective element", which he defines as "the area of taste" (1988: 16). He proposes as one of the touchstones of good writing that manner and matter should have the same importance (see *ibid.*). According to this, *London Fields* would be a classic example of bad writing, and *Tiempo de silencio* would not be far from it, given that the formal characteristics of both novels take precedence over their content. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the decision of what constitutes "good writing" is essentially a subjective one. To take the example of the two authors with whom we are dealing here: Martín-Santos was, as Martin Amis is, a highly accomplished reader. Their familiarity with literary criticism is certain. And yet, they both considered their novels, in which manner is more relevant than matter, as writing worthy of publication. The majority of their large readerships will probably share this opinion.

Translators may disagree with authors, critics and readers. If we take two different translators working on the same literary piece, they might even be in disagreement with each other. An argument in favour of reproducing Amis' and Martín-Santos' stylistic mannerisms in translation would be that, in the case of both *Tiempo de silencio* and *London Fields*, what can be perceived as "bad writing" or sluggish prose, is intentional, and it serves a purpose that often is not merely formal, but also content-related. In any case, if David Lodge's opinion is anything to go by, "great fiction can survive, not only translation, but a measurable amount of bad writing in the original" (1984: 26).

As the critics have often remarked, the elaboration of the prose in both *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* makes these novels acquire a poetic quality. It is difficult not to agree with Salvador Clotas when he states that "toda la obra [*Tiempo de silencio*] revela un claro oficio de poeta" (1970: 15). Buckley (1973: 197) went further and claimed: "*Tiempo de silencio* es un poema". The writing of Martin Amis also overflows with artifice characteristic of compositions in verse. Confronted with the

overwhelming display of wordiness and language manipulation by both Martin Amis and Martín-Santos, one finds it very difficult to decide where the poetic ends and the absurd begins.

In *London Fields*, when Nicola weeps, “[she drenches] the feet of the god of gravity” (LF: 127), and, at another point, the female protagonist of the novel drinks “most of the pint of water that had colourlessly monitored her sleep” (LF: 192); Marmaduke’s room is “a slum of toys” (LF: 273); while Keith is driving in the rain, “[the] fuzz and splat [of the windscreen] subtly harmonized with the pond-mantle and the bobbing tadpoles of his tarnished vision” (LF: 287). Self-parody has never been absent from Martin Amis’ fiction<sup>45</sup>, which makes it rather hard to draw the line between the author’s *serious* intentions, and his will to move the readers to laughter.

In *Tiempo de silencio* we find similar examples. Some cities are “proyectadas sin pasión, pero con concupiscencia hacia el futuro” (Ts: 15); on another occasion, the author exclaims: “Como si no fuera el tabú del incesto tan audazmente violado en estos primitivos tálamos como en los montones de yerba<sup>46</sup> de cualquier isla paradisíaca” (Ts: 52); on yet another, the beginning of the weekend is described as “un sábado elástico que se prolongaba en la madrugada del domingo contagiándolo de sustancia sabática” (Ts: 122). Self-parody is out of the question in this case, but irony is very much in the forefront of Martín-Santos’ intentions. He is mimicking the society of his age by means of an exuberant prose which could not be farther removed from the base reality he is portraying.

On the other hand, Martin Amis and Martín-Santos could “free” the translator from a different kind of constriction, in that their style favours creativity as a way of re-inventing the original effects. The translator can fully assume the authority of a “deputy author”, a re-creator of the novel in a language in which it was not originally conceived and written. In this capacity, translators will have to make decisions that affect the translated text as a literary product. They will have to assess the work of fiction which is to be translated, so that the most appropriate strategies can be chosen in each occasion. Thus, they are in a position to decide which elements of the source

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<sup>45</sup>See, for instance, within *London Fields* itself, Janit Slotnick’s comment: “And we’re unhappy about the names [of the characters in your novel], sir.” (p. 160). Martin Amis, who is renowned for his literary games with the names of his characters, uses Young’s voice to recount the story. The presence of the omniscient author, as opposed to a narrator who is taking part in the action, is, however, clear throughout the book (see Chapter 3, section 1.1).

<sup>46</sup>Incidentally, this is the poetic spelling of the more common “hierba”.

text will have to be compensated, if they cannot be reproduced as such in the target text, and which ones can be considered unavoidable translation losses.

Some key elements in the style of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* which may present translatability problems (onomatopoeias, alliterations, neologisms, puns) have a very limited repercussion on the novel as a whole, if considered individually. In consequence, their effect can be elaborated otherwise in the target text, it can be compensated through elements that, although different from those utilised in the source text, somehow serve an equivalent purpose. That is, their exact, immediate reproduction in the target language is not as important as the creation of a similar effect in the target text. Hervey and Higgins (1992: 35-40) enumerate four types of compensation:

**a. compensation in kind:** “making up for one type of textual effect in the source text by another type in the target text”.

**b. compensation in place:** “making up for the loss of a particular effect found at a given place in the source text by re-creating a corresponding effect at an earlier or later place in the target text”.

**c. compensation by merging:** “to condense source text features carried over a relatively long stretch of text [...] into a relatively short stretch of the target text”.

**d. compensation by splitting:** “in cases where there is no single target language word that covers the same range of meaning as a given source text word”.

The application of compensatory mechanisms in a text always remains optional, i.e. a translator can decide that the translation loss that occurs at any given point in the text is negligible, and does not, therefore, need to be compensated. The essential conflict lies in the balance between the form and content of the target text, which depends on which of those elements predominates in the orientation of the translation process. Often, prosodic figures are sacrificed in favour of a preservation of the source text meaning. In a similar manner, the semantic content of the source text may be altered in some way, so that the reproduction of its stylistic features in the target text is made easier.

The translator determines which is the best strategy in each individual case, but, in general, when translating prose, content tends to prevail over form. In the case of both

*London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, however, the manner in which the content is presented might need to be given preference in certain passages, so that the rhythm and, occasionally, the poetic quality of the writing are preserved.

## 2. *London Fields*

going by purely stylistic criteria, he [Martin Amis] can out-write almost any other living novelist. (John Walsh; *The Tablet*, 6 January 1990)

“Joan Didion wrote, ‘Style is character’, and I said that style is not character [...]. Style is everything and nothing” (in Haffenden, 1985: 4). With these words, Martin Amis defined the most controversial feature in his fiction. And this definition is a small-scale duplicate of many of the characteristics of his prose: it contains a quotation, repetitions, parallelisms, a contradiction and a paradox; but, even more significantly, as in Martin Amis’ novels, the content here is presented to the reader wrapped in words and cadences that expand, develop and reiterate what is being said.

Richard Rayner stated, “...the passion in an Amis novel comes not from concern with character or plot but from a love of dazzling play, the creation of an internal linguistic world. That explains, perhaps, why his books do not seem to translate, or even to travel, and why Amis--whose voice has been the most original and distinctive of British fiction writers in the 1980s--is not particularly well known abroad” (*The Sunday Telegraph*, 17 September, 1989). This “internal linguistic world” poses one of the greatest difficulties for the translator.

An aspect of Amis’ prose which has given rise to criticism derives from its essential modernity. The contemporary quality of his writings has given rise to doubts about their longevity. Powell remarked: “Amis’s language becomes only of its time and lacks even the ambition of timelessness” (1981: 45). It seems difficult to accept the existence of such a lack in a novel as thoroughly ambitious as *London Fields*. On the other hand, the stylistic trait deplored by Powell is certainly present in this book and its constant invocation of contemporary concepts may be perceived as built-in obsolescence. The fact that Amis’ language seems to be circumscribed to specific temporal (and geographical) parameters has implications for the translation of *London Fields*, given that its conversion into a target text will involve extracting the prose from the said parameters.



In *The International Herald Tribune* (22 January 1990), Mary Blume remarked: "There is a tendency, if not to damn Amis with faint praise, then to praise him with a faint damn". The truth is that, although most critics agree that it is the most outstanding feature in his novels, Martin Amis' style has aroused as much criticism as applause. Melvyn Bragg, in *The Listener* (21 September 1989) praised the prose of *London Fields* for being "hard-edged, funny, rifted with literary allusion", only to add further on: "Alliterations and repetitions threaten to become cluttered and self-imitative, hammering at the prose like hail until you want to stop." Martyn Harris described Martin Amis' style as "superheated rhetoric" (*New Statesman and Society*, 23 September 1989). On the other hand, he goes on to admit that Martin Amis is "the only English writer of his generation to kick his way out of the reticent, genteel language of the contemporary novel into a modern idiom which manages to be both coarse and eloquent, demotic and cerebral".

Style is the most important element in *London Fields*. Martin Amis himself, when questioned about whether he was surrendering human insight for the sake of style, replied: "I would certainly sacrifice any psychological or realistic truth for a phrase, for a paragraph that has a spin on it" (in Haffenden, 1985: 12). To him, it seems obvious, what really matters is *how*, rather than *what*. Andrew Calcutt remarked: "He [Martin Amis] ridicules the idea of the novel "unfolding" by giving a synopsis of the whole story in the first chapter" (*Living Marxism*, March 1990). Although this statement is not strictly true, for *London Fields* has a "surprise" ending, it is justified by the fact that the plot itself seems to be a mere excuse to carry out an exercise in style throughout nearly five hundred pages. Martin Amis himself said: "I think partly because of the speeding up of culture people are resistant to style. They like it plain. For me, writing is what it's all about, not story telling, not pleasant characters easily identified" (*International Herald Tribune*, 22 January 1990).

Any translator will have a very hard task in maintaining the source text's levels of elaboration, and in modulating the rhythm of the Spanish language so that a reproduction of the original features is practicable. Words and structures would have to be carefully chosen in such a way that the elaboration and distance from convention, the linguistic "abnormality" that pervades the source text, are not lost in translation. Martin Amis' style is certainly anything but spontaneous. On several occasions he has

admitted to meticulously revising each one of his sentences<sup>47</sup>. Allan Massie claims that “Amis has [...] fallen in love with his way of writing” (*The Scotsman*, 23 September 1989), and Philip Kerr maintains that “the author’s obvious fascination with sex was only exceeded by his even more obvious fascination with words” (*Time Out*, 13-20 September 1989). As a result, Martin Amis’ are hyper-elaborate texts, whose tone is always tense. Their rhythmic patterns are very strong, and this, along with the alertness of their prose, makes them into highly artificial novels.

Martin Amis’ writings reflect a conscious wish to break free from established norms, to escape from those current trends in literature that have a label attached. If his striving for innovation, the originality and energy of his prose were to be as conspicuous in the target text as it is in the source text, this would inevitably lead the translator to echo “the flip cleverness” that, according to Julian Symons, “is the least attractive aspect of Amis’s writing” (*London Review of Books*, 28 September 1989). Martin Amis himself hinted at a reason that might explain his obsession with words when he said, “Horrible things aren’t horrible in novels, because you have this intermediary which is writing, style, and everything which gives pleasure in a novel” (in Haffenden, 1985: 6). Thus, in order to prevent all the horrors in *London Fields* from becoming “horrible things”, the style should be as elaborate and “twisted” in the target text as it is in the source text.

Martin Amis’ personal style pervades, with some variation, that used by each of his characters. The fact that he chose an American as a narrator in *London Fields* is not sufficient to disguise the stylistic features that recur in all of his novels (see p. 91-93). However, the expression modes of each of the protagonists is well differentiated in the source text. According to Julian Symons (*London Review of Books*, 28 September 1989), “All are outsize figures depicted in terms of TV soaps, pornographic magazines and the coloured dummies of advertising. A slapdash imaginative genius, plus an unerring ear for the tones, turns and terms of everyday English speech of all classes turns these cardboard cut-outs into archetypal creations both menacing and comic”. He goes on to add: “Nicola thinks in terms of pornographic fiction, as Keith does in darts language and television clichés”. It seems, therefore, that it is not just the external presentation of the main characters (made by Samson Young--or Martin Amis) that

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<sup>47</sup>In Martin Amis’ own words: “[...] you are terrifically careful of working at it once it’s there on the page. I simply say the sentence in my head until it sounds right. No matter how many times I go through books, I always finds rhymes and chimes and bad rhythms that make me start.” (in Haffenden, 1985: 4).

regulates the form in which they will be depicted in the target text, but also the self-description that can be inferred from the linguistic behaviour of each of them.

Although style is a global question, i.e. a feature that affects the novel as a whole, it would seem preferable for the purpose of this study to analyse the translatability problems that it causes in the specific case of *London Fields* by dividing these problems into three broad categories, for methodological reasons. Thus, what follows is an examination of the phonemic/graphic level, the lexical level, and the syntactical level, which encompasses here word combination in basic syntactic units, as well as the distribution of these in larger ones.

## 2.1. Phonic/Graphic level

An eagerness to elaborate even minimal details is present throughout the whole of Martin Amis' narrative. It starts in the lower (phonic/graphic) levels of the text and encompasses the totality of the creative process. *London Fields* is an exemplary illustration of fiction in which phonic and graphic variation create what Hervey *et al.* denominate "special effects", a concept which they define as "the use of phonic/graphic features in order to create or -more usually- reinforce a thematic motif or mood within a text" (1995: 75).

The reproduction of graphic resources and punctuation does not pose major difficulties. However, it requires as much attention from the translator as it has received from the author. An example of Martin Amis' fastidiousness in this respect can be found in *Money* (1984), the novel that preceded *London Fields*. At one point, the main character, John Self, reflects: "I want to slow down now, and check out the scenery, and put in a stop or two. I want some semi-colons." (1984: 292). The only semi-colon in the novel appears in the last sentence, when John Self is, in words of his creator "slowing down" (in Haffenden, 1985: 14). The suppression or inadequate reproduction of this type of features can lead to an obliteration in the target text of the effect intended by the author.

Martin Amis shows a partiality towards the use of italics to attract the reader's attention, and, in fact, he also uses the term "italicized" in order to describe a shocked or vigilant frame of mind, not just in *London Fields* (see LF: 340), but also in other novels (see, for instance, the conversation between Charles Highway and his brother-

in-law, Norman Entwistle in a car, “italicised” by the Lotus Cortina’s speed, in *The Rachel Papers*, 1984: 206; or the sentence, “the night was in italics”, in *Success*, 1985: 195). He also resorts frequently to suspension points in order to emphasise the meaning or effect of some sentence, in particular when he considers it to be especially witty: “Maybe short legs were shortcuts... Yeah” (LF: 108); “I mean, what the digestive system of a London pigeon considers as *waste*...” (LF: 116); “And he tensed himself, listening for the first whisper of recurrence...” (LF: 278); “Flattened with sweat was his duck-white hair...” (LF: 279), etc. This mark was maintained by Moreno in every one of its occurrences (CL: 138, 148, 342 and 343, respectively), which maintains the stylistic consistency in the recurrence of this feature in the target text.

Phonic devices play a very important role in the configuration of *London Fields*’ style, although this text, a novel, was not intended to be read aloud. Onomatopoeias, assonance, alliteration, and rhyme follow one another in an almost uninterrupted sequence, creating a very strong rhythmic pattern. Listed below are some examples of this, together with Moreno’s translations:

- “The streets are full of jokers, dodgers, jack-the-lads and willie-the-dips--whole crews of Keiths...” (LF: 134) – “Las calles están plagadas de tipejos, granujas, compadres y buscones: tripulaciones enteras de Keiths...” (CL: 169).
- “Burglars were being burgled by fellow burglars, and were doing the same thing back. Burgled goods jiggled from flat to flat” (LF: 248) – “Los ladrones eran robados por sus propios compañeros de oficio, y hacían a su vez lo mismo con éstos. Los objetos robados rebotaban de casa en casa” (CL: 306)
- “Sad animal having sinned singly” (LF: 299) – “Animal triste, tras haber pecado en solitario” (CL: 366).
- “She giggled uglily: ugly giggling. She knew the giggling was ugly but that only made her giggle all the uglier” (LF: 320) – “Emitió una risa tonta y fea: risa tonta y fea. Sabía que aquella risa era fea; pero esta certidumbre sólo lograba hacerla reír de forma más fea y tonta aún” (CL: 392).

If it is the case that the phonic feature itself is the most important element in the context, as it seems to be in the examples above, it would be possible to sacrifice the

original content (always within reason) and utilise formal attributes that reproduce the source text's effect in the target text (alliteration, rhyme, repetition, etc.). Generally speaking, semantic content occupies a secondary position in Martin Amis' fiction. In consequence, to opt for this kind of solution does not imply a separation from the source text, but rather, an imitation of this, carried out through the means that the target language offers the translator, who thus becomes a creator, or, as mentioned earlier (see p. 59) a "re-creator". Moreno, however, chose to retain the semantic content of the passages, even when that involved the disappearance of a stylistic feature in the target text.

## 2.2. Lexical level

On the lexical level we will consider those words whose form, or that of their components, poses translatability problems in isolation, although the main problems will arise in connection with the upper (syntactic) and/or lower (phonic/graphic) levels in the text.

Martin Amis invents some words, deforms others, and distributes them in the text as he pleases. Often, these resources are motivated by a desire that is merely playful in nature, and they are not fundamentally connected to the plot. This is the case with the many newly-created compound terms, which the narrator uses when describing one of the secondary characters: "His pimpsuit, pimphats and pimpshoes [...]. Among the stolen goods in the pimpboot of his pimphat are more pimpclothes, swathed in pimppolythene. Every other day, as the pimpwhim takes him, his pimphair is either superfrizzed or expensively relaxed. His pimpfingers are dustered with pimprings. Boy does Thelonius look like a pimp." (LF: 208).

In the source language, expressions such as "pimp suit", "pimp shoes", etc., in which the first noun acts as an adjective, are perfectly idiomatic, and thus, the fusion of both terms only implies a minimal alteration of the norm. On the other hand, the collocation of a noun as an adjectival complement in apposition is relatively rare in Spanish<sup>48</sup>. The translation of the above mentioned English compounds, which conform to the pattern

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<sup>48</sup> Compounds like "coche cama", or "casa cuna" do exist, but the nature of the relation between the two names is different and more complex: a *coche cama* is a train coach with beds in it, and a *casa cuna* is a establishment where babies are looked after while their parents are unable to take care of them.



noun1+noun2, into Spanish would result in the conversion of noun1 to an adjective, which will normally be postpositive. Alternatively, it can be translated as noun2+*de*+noun1. Thus, the most idiomatic translation of the compounds quoted before would be “traje de chulo”, “zapatos de chulo”, etc.<sup>49</sup> Although, as indicated above, the source text paragraph conforms to the norm in English to a large extent, it seems undeniable that it reveals an attempt at disrupting regularity, a wish to shock the readers, or, at least, to attract their attention. In consequence, it would be valid to include in the corresponding target text passage some element that contravenes the grammatical norm of the Spanish language. Thus, the *pimp*- compounds could be substituted by “chulo-” compounds: “chulotraje”, “chulozapatos”, “chulosombrero”, etc., which was the option favoured by Moreno (CL: 259).

In relation to what has been said above, it is worth noting that the readiness of the English language to form compounds sometimes poses translatability problems. The made-up term “whydoit” (LF: 3), which is modelled on “whodunit”, a term that does not have a synonym in Spanish, was rendered by Moreno by means of an elaboration on the semantic content of the original: “No la clásica novela en la que se busca al asesino: se trata más bien de descubrir los móviles del asesinato.” (CL: 14). The meaning of both words could also have been explained in the target text by creating two new terms (such as “quiénlo hizo” and “porquélo hicieron”, for instance). Something similar happens when women are described as “timekeepers--keepers of the time” (LF: 203). Both expressions would translate into Spanish as “guardianas del tiempo”. The most immediate solution would be to resort to a paraphrase such as: “las guardianas del tiempo, las que guardan el tiempo”. In this way, although the morphological identity is partially lost (“guardianas”/“guardan”), the notion that one expression elaborates on the other is preserved, as is preserved the synonymity between them both. Alternatively, the semantic duplication could be maintained, even if the formal repetition is lost: “cronómetros, guardianas del tiempo” (CL: 254).

The reverse instance takes place when a contrast is established between “girl friends” and “girlfriend” (LF: 377) with a comical intention. The respective translations of these expressions differ greatly from each other: “amigas” and “novia”. This means that the equivocal tone of the source text would be lost in the target text if those terms are utilised (Moreno uses “amigas íntimas” in contrast with “novia”, CL: 460). However,

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<sup>49</sup>There is not a Spanish adjective derived from “chulo” with the meaning that the term has in this particular context, and, therefore, the first of the two procedures indicated in the previous paragraph would not be feasible in this case.

there is a possibility of reproducing the word-play in Spanish, by means of a graphic device which is absent from the original: italicising the word “*amiga*”, which is often used as an euphemistic term for a woman with whom a relationship of a sexual nature is maintained. The readers would be then able to grasp the differentiation between an “amiga” (a female with whom a friendship link is established) and an “*amiga*” (a female with whom a sexual or sentimental relationship is established). This is an example of how lexical elements can be graphically compensated for in the target text.

On other occasions, words are deformed accordingly to the theme. For instance, when the narrator reproduces the thoughts of an inebriated Keith, he substitutes the velar occlusive consonant sounds for their corresponding voiced and voiceless labial and alveolar (i.e. /k/ for /p,t/, and /g/ for /b,d/): “Another bockle [“bottle”]? Already bit tiggly [“tiddly”]. That bull finish: right in the miggie [“middle”]. No diggling [“diddling”], but give Debs a lickie [“little”] cuggle [“cuddle”]. Quick piggle [“piddle”].” (LF: 385). This word deformation also suggests a regression to chldtalk, which befits Keith’s train of thought: Debbie (“Debs”), the youngest of his lovers, is practically a child. The target text should therefore feature a convincing deformation of the words, one appropriate to drunken speech, and the alliterative regularity should also be preserved. If it is the case that the original correspondence cannot be maintained, the iteration of sounds should at least be reproduced in the target text, in order to communicate the humour of the source text. The translator can resort to those sounds that are associated with drunken speech in Spanish, and repeat them throughout the whole passage, so that an alliteration similar to that of the source text is created in the target text: “¿Odda bodella?. Ya un poco googui. Qué remate en diana... En toa la méelula...” (CL: 470).

At a certain point, the narrator introduces the names of various parts of Keith’s anatomy as words that allude to some of the functions of those organs, by means of the suffix *-er*, which suggests activity: “peepers”, “kisser”, “gnashers”, “feelers”, “ticker”, “gawpers”, “flipper”, “chopper” (LF: 401-402). This is a feature typical of English slang, and does not have a similar dialectal equivalent in Spanish (Moreno does, indeed, suppress the allusions from the target text, CL: 488-489). However, new words could be created, as long as the meaning of these new words were easily identifiable from their form. The solution to this problem would therefore be to use in the target text colloquialisms to which an ending with a function similar to the English *-er*, like *-or(a)*, would be added: “fisgadores”, “besadora”, “rechinadores”, “tocadoras”, “latidor”, and so on.

### 2.3. Syntactical level

For methodological purposes, under this heading not only sentences or phrases in isolation, but also their combination, whose final result is the text, will be examined. This category will combine sentence level and “discourse level”, which, according to Hervey and Higgins, “is concerned both with relations between sentences and with relations between larger units: paragraphs, stanzas, chapters, volumes and so on” (1992: 48). Translatability problems become more complicated at this point, since the components at this level participate in the difficulties that are posed by the lower levels (phonic/graphic and morphological).

The recurrence of certain stylistic features (metaphor, repetition, parallelism, alliteration, self-reference, intertextuality, etc.) gives the text unity, coherence. Hervey and Higgins define coherence as “the tacit, yet intellectually discernible, thematic development that characterizes a *cogent*<sup>50</sup> text”, as distinct from a random sequence of unrelated sentences (1992: 248). In the particular instance of *London Fields*, style is the basis that underlies plot development. Paradoxically, style becomes part of the plot all through the novel: the narrative line supports the succession of rhetorical devices, which, in return, reinforce the development of the theme.

The translation of metaphors poses a series of difficulties that lie beyond the scope of this study, since they are not specific to *London Fields*. Hyperbaton, repetition, parallelism and contrast are devices that can be copied from the source text with little effort, since they also conform to the rules of the Spanish language. Reproducing the rhythm of such iteration, which hinges on devices mentioned in the previous sections, is, however, a more complicated issue: “a squanderer’s kiss, the kiss of an impossible self-squanderer” (LF: 187); “A performing artist, a bullshit artist, something of a piss artist, and a considerable sack artist, she was also an *artist*” (LF: 191). Repeating a phonic or lexical element, even if this element does not coincide with the one that appears in the source text, is the best way to imitate the original rhythmic effect. When made-up terms are used in the source text, the translator could resort to the word-formation devices that the target language allows him/her (for instance: “el beso de una derrochadora, el beso de una increíble autoderrochadora”<sup>51</sup>), or to new expressions (for instance: “Artista del escenario, artista de la mentira, un poco artista del morapio y

<sup>50</sup>Cogency is the term used to indicate the intellectual association of the ideas present in a given text.

<sup>51</sup>Moreno’s translation, “el beso del despilfarrador, el beso de un imposible despilfarrador de sí mismo” (CL: 234), verges on the incomprehensible.

respetable artista del sexo, también era *artista*”<sup>52</sup>) so that the departure from the norm which is obvious in English is also evident in Spanish.

It is on this textual level that **compensation** strategies mainly operate. These are devices which will diminish to a greater or lesser extent the losses that will occur in translation (see p. 59). Compensation can, and in fact does, operate on all levels, from the phonic/graphic (as it has been seen in previous sections) to the supratextual (compensation of humoristic effects, for instance). Its effects, however, become more apparent when lengthy passages of the source text are contemplated, notoriously when the chosen strategy is compensation in place.

It is worth noting once more that the plot is neither the most important element in *London Fields*, nor the most striking. According to Martin Amis, “Style is not neutral, it gives moral directions” (in Haffenden, 1985: 23). It seems understandable that someone who believes in such a principle will devote most of his literary energy to the way in which he writes his books. This implies that the content of these books will be subordinate to their formal features. This trait, which could be perceived as a flaw in his fiction, is something with which Martin Amis is fully satisfied: “I won’t sacrifice local effects for some overall effect” (ibid.: 9) is the maxim that, in the author’s own words, informs his fictional work. It is in this maxim, to which Martin Amis adheres religiously, that the explanation of all the translatability problems that his narrative poses seems to lie.

The translatability problems concealed in individual passages or episodes of *London Fields* (how to reproduce in the target language the meaningful babble of Kim Talent and Marmaduke Clinch, or Incarnación’s flawed English; how to find equivalents for the numerous puns; how to reproduce Keith’s respectively unfather-like and sexist attitude when he uses the pronoun *it* to refer to his baby daughter and Nicola; etc.) is what prevents the target text from having the same intensity as the original. The comprehensibility of the target text will remain unaffected, even though the comic or dramatic effect, as the case may be, of such passages is lost in translation. And yet, the global outcome is not as important for Martin Amis as are the countless isolated artifices and the impression they make on the reader.

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<sup>52</sup> A rendition such as: “Artista polifacética, artista de mentirijillas, a veces también artista de gusto dudoso, y sin duda artista consumada en la cama, Nicola era sobre todo una *artista*” (CL: 239), alters the meaning of the source text, but retains its syntactic peculiarity.

James Wolcott wrote: "Amis has so many deflection devices operating in this novel that the sympathetic pangs he wishes to arouse are lost in all the ricochet effects" (*Vanity Fair*, March 1990). The author is aware of the effect his intricate prose may have on his readers, but he waives the potential adverse reactions as a minor inconvenience, when weighed against the magnitude of his endeavour: "I don't feel that I'm shortchanging the truth by writing at my highest level of energy, although I think it sometimes exhausts the reader" (in Haffenden, 1985: 16). The target text has to be written at the same level of energy, so that the effect it has on its readers, whether favourable or inauspicious, mirrors the one intended in the original text. For all those who, as Martin Amis anticipates, end up exhausted, there remains Melvyn Bragg's elucidation, published in *The Listener* (21 September 1989): "This is a book for the tortoise written by somebody that looks like a hare".

### 3. *Tiempo de silencio*

It is difficult to talk about *the* style in *Tiempo de silencio*, since this novel is a compendium of different styles (see, for example, the Cervantine echoes in Pedro's first journey to the shanties, Ts: 50-54, or the picaresque resonances in the widow's speech, Ts: 20-29, or the influence of the "nouveau roman" in the description of the cell, Ts: 210-215). However, there seems to be a certain consistency in this variety: Martín-Santos strove to create a new style, through the parodic blending of different literary modes in one piece of work. Curutchet perceptively points out that "la más obvia cualidad de *Tiempo de silencio* [...] radica en su condición de *summa*, en la vastedad de procedimientos que incorpora y en la diversidad de las influencias que refleja." (1973: 30)

Curutchet (ibid.: 29) expresses the author's desire to rejuvenate the novel in the following terms: "la renovación estilística marcha en Luis Martín-Santos de la mano con una pareja reestructuración de los supuestos ideológicos y morales de que se nutre la obra narrativa." Martín-Santos reacts against the realism that had characterised Spanish fiction after the Civil War, especially through the behaviourist trend in the previous decade, which found a landmark in the publication of *El Jarama* (Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio: 1956). In the words of Barrero Pérez (1987: 57) "Hacia dicho año [1955], la narrativa social había cerrado el camino a la expresión individualista, situación ésta que perdurará hasta que, ya en los años sesenta, se produzca la reacción contraria." According to Labanyi, Martín-Santos' reaction against realism was



performed through the combination of two elements, irony and myth: "Martín-Santos rompe con el realismo al ironizar el mito" (1983: 14).

It is this individualism that Martín-Santos wanted to rescue in *Tiempo de silencio*. As opposed to the "impersonalidad estilística" (Mainer: 1980, 59) which the realist writers had used to distance themselves from their heroes and their themes, Martín-Santos resorts to an extreme stylistic commitment, which emphasises individuality and subjectivism. He criticised the pervading trend among contemporary Spanish novelists in the following terms: "En España hay una escuela realista, un tanto pedestre y comprometida, que es la que da el tono. Tendrá que alcanzar un mayor contenido y complejidad si quiere escapar a una repetición monótona y sin interés." (in Winecoff-Díaz, 1968: 237).

Martín-Santos was greatly influenced by Joyce's *Ulysses* and the rhetoric of the Latin classics. Some critics (see Clotas: 1970) have seen in his prose reminiscences of Kafka's stories, as well as vestiges of Gongorism. If a single feature common to all those writers were to be pinpointed, it would have to be the stylistic hyper-elaboration of their works. *Tiempo de silencio* is indeed a hyper-elaborate text, not only with regard to the delivery of the contexts, but also to the actual distribution of the content in the novel, the layout itself.

J.C. Mainer (1980: 59) highlights the "alto índice de elaboración del estilo" as one of the instruments that the author uses in his effort to break free from the conventions of neo-realism and establish himself as a pioneer of the new Spanish novel. E. Díaz-Varcárcel (1982: 14) sees Martín-Santos as a champion of "barroquismo", opposed to the prevailing "asceticismo" in the Spanish novel after the Civil War.

All the critics signal the importance of this imbalance between form and content in *Tiempo de silencio*. J. Riezu (1980: 31) remarks that "El argumento de «Tiempo de Silencio» [sic] no es lo más importante en la obra, e incluso, puede decirse que juega un papel secundario en la misma intención del autor y en la pretensión de la obra" and that *Tiempo de silencio* "es una obra de pretensión formal más que obra de fondo" (ibid.: 94). It is manner that takes precedence over matter in this novel. For political reasons, Martín-Santos had to avoid a direct criticism of Spanish society. This criticism is, however, apparent from the way in which the story is told. On a more strictly literary note, Salvador Clotas (1970: 10) claims that Martín-Santos "se coloca en una posición polémica [within the Spanish literary tradition] por su descarada

preocupación por el estilo”, a style which he defines as that of a great reader (“se trata del estilo de un gran lector”, *ibid.*: 14). Style is, it appears, all-important for the author, both for political and aesthetic reasons, and, consequently it ought to be essential for the translator, too.

### 3.1. Phonic/Graphic level

The first striking graphic feature (except, perhaps, the extraordinary pervasiveness of the comma) of *Tiempo de silencio* is the form of presentation of the dialogues in the opening section of the novel. In Spanish, each intervention of the interlocutors is introduced by a dash, and any explanation that may follow, for example: “...-dijo X(-...)” or “...-continuó Y(-...)”, is separated from the body of the dialogue also by a dash. In English, the interventions appear between inverted commas, and any subsequent explanation is separated by a comma.

Martín-Santos, however, broke the convention and presented the dialogues in the English fashion. It is in this first section of *Tiempo de silencio* that Pedro muses on the scientific handicap that afflicts Spain, making the nation unable to compete with other, more developed countries. In the decision to use a foreign form of presentation of the dialogues we can see a veiled reflection of this theme, which will prove to be central in the novel: the fascination with “the foreign”, the belief that anglo-saxon culture is superior. It is also yet another element of surprise in the novel, something that makes it different from conventional literary production in Spanish.

The first aspect would be missing from any version of the novel other than the original one: with the disappearance of the Spanish language, the element of comparison between the source culture and any other (and this is especially true in the case of the translation of this novel into English) would also disappear. The second aspect, however, can be more easily preserved. English readers would be, presumably, as surprised at the presence of dashes in dialogues in the target text as any Spanish reader would be with the appearance of inverted commas in the source text. Nevertheless, in the published translation of *Tiempo de silencio* into English, no change was effected: the lines of the dialogues appear between inverted commas, as they would naturally in English, but, more importantly, as they appear, uncharacteristically, in the Spanish text. Compensation in kind (substitution of dashes for inverted commas in the target

text) could have been easily resorted to, and it would reduce the translation loss: the breach of the norm, the element of innovation, would have been retained.

Another striking feature in *Tiempo de silencio*, as indicated above, is the enormous number of commas that punctuate the text. This overabundance is explained in terms of the many parallelistic structures and repetitions in the novel. It is true that the Spanish language tends to produce longer sentences than English (multiple subordination, for one thing, is more common in the former). However, what we are confronted with in *Tiempo de silencio* goes beyond normal expectations in a Spanish text, and it should be treated by the translator as such. To take but one example: the second section of the novel, which spans 42 lines, is just one, very long, consecutive sentence (“Hay ciudades tan [...], tan [...], tan [...] ... que no tienen catedral”, Ts: 15-16). The author describes Madrid, without actually mentioning the name of the city, by means of 27 clauses beginning with “tan” and incorporating several other types of sub-clauses within. This extraordinary description, very close to a feature typical of poetry that Leo Spitzer called “chaotic enumeration” (see Curutchet, 1973: 30), enables the author to introduce the different spheres around which he unfolds the plot. But it also allows him to make a comprehensive evaluation (mostly negative) of Spain as a whole: from the purely physical, to the intellectual and the social.

The conclusion of the sentence (“que no tienen catedral”) is so materially remote from its beginning as it is from the content of the paragraph from a thematic point of view. The lack of a cathedral, a fact that may seem somewhat irrelevant, comes as a climax to the exposition of many other deficiencies which range from the political (“tan traídas y llevadas por gobernantes arbitrarios”) and the religious (“tan agitadas por tribunales eclesiásticos con relajación al brazo secular”) to the artistic (“tan llenas de tonadilleras y de autores de comedias de costumbres...”) and the purely environmental (“tan abufaradas de autobuses de dos pisos que echan humo cuanto más negro mejor...”). This physical distance is essential to the function of the passage, which could be maintained in English, however awkward the result (the original is not exactly conventional, either). G. Leeson preferred to modify the structure of the source text, and presents his reader with an interpretation of the passage as a succession of exclamative sentences, finishing the paragraph with an anacoluthic line that, apart from making no grammatical sense, defies the purpose of the sentence: “The city is so stunted, so lacking in historical substance, treated in such an offhand way by arbitrary rulers, [...], filled with snorting two-decker buses spouting clouds of black smoke

over the pavements where people walk with raincoats on days of cold sun in this city with no cathedral” (TS: 11-12).

The importance of a correct interpretation of the source text is rendered obvious by this example. Punctuation should be observed closely and reproduced adequately in the target text. The consequences of not doing so may vary from the loss of a stylistic feature to the loss of the meaning reflected in the source text. Leeson’s rendition, as shown above, fails on both accounts.

In *Tiempo de silencio* (as in *London Fields*), as has been mentioned elsewhere (see pp. 58-59), the prose is sometimes endowed with features traditionally associated with literature in verse. It would be difficult not to agree with Salvador Clotas, who sees the style in *Tiempo de silencio* as befitting a poetic composition, rather than a purely narrative one: “la expresión de Martín-Santos es demasiado rica y gongorina para la narración. Es un estilo el suyo más lírico que épico” (1970: 14), and goes as far as to claim that some of the sentences on the first page of *Tiempo de silencio* can be easily transcribed in verse.

As well as rhythmic syntactic features, which will be dealt with in the next section, we also find phonic features in *Tiempo de silencio* which can be interpreted in a poetic key: alliterations (“El venero de la inventiva.”, Ts: 8; “Cada cual con su cada cuala y clás con clás”, Ts: 196; “amojado hombre de la meseta”, Ts: 290) and internal rhymes (“agilidad” - “vivacidad” - “rapacidad”, Ts: 20; “grumo de humo”, Ts: 82; “el galimatías literario-sentimental de Matías”, *ibid.*). Leeson favoured semantics over stylistics when translating these features: “The source of invention” (TS: 4), “Each to his own sort and class to class” (TS: 161), “the little dried-up man of the meseta” (TS: 243); “agility – vivacity – rapacity”<sup>53</sup> (TS: 14), “froth of smoke” (TS: 67), “Matías’ literary-sentimental gibberish” (*ibid.*). However, in the case of the onomatopoeic sequence for the sound of the moving train, “Tracatraca-tracatraca-tracatraca-tracatraca-tracateo-tracatraca-tracatraca-tracatraca” (Ts: 292), he partially imported the original: “Tracatraca-tracatraca-tracatraca” (TS: 245). This onomatopoeia has a conventional equivalent in English, namely “clickety-clack-clickety-clack-clickety-clack...”, which could have been used to replace the original sequence in the source text. Thus, a concession was made to the source culture in a mainly target-culture oriented translation.

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<sup>53</sup> In this case, there is a partial coincidence in English as to the rhyme: “vivacity – rapacity”.

Much of what has been said in the section dealing with this kind of occurrences in *London Fields* can be applied in this case: matter can be modified in favour of form, as long as the result is coherent and fits in well in the context. Some elements are easier to translate than others. In the cases where such a straightforward solution is not possible, **compensation in kind** (using a textual effect in the target text different from the one used in the source text) or **in place** (introducing similar rhetorical figures in other passages of the target text) could be resorted to.

### 3.2. Lexical level

Ramón Buckley (1973: 197) said of *Tiempo de silencio*: “la novela, de principio a fin, es un continuo neologismo”. It is easy to agree with this statement, from both a qualitative and a quantitative point of view. Qualitatively, its linguistic originality makes *Tiempo de silencio* a “new” kind of novel. Quantitatively, the number of terms invented or adapted by Martín-Santos justifies the allegation of “continuity”: they pervade the novel to such an extent.

Jacques Beyrie (1980), Eduardo Galán Font (1986) and J.L. Suárez Granda (1986: 70-74) provide a classification of neologisms and made-up terms used by Martín-Santos in *Tiempo de silencio*. Suárez Granda’s is the most comprehensive (a few items have been “misplaced”, though, some of which are mentioned below), albeit too generalising: it includes periphrases and the transposition of proper names into common nouns, which do not necessarily involve an innovative use of words themselves. He lists:

- **neologisms** proper: nouns (“polivinazo”, Ts: 15; “terebrofilia”, Ts: 157), adjectives (“morbígenas”, Ts: 34; “blancoscuros”, Ts: 67; “emprecariante”, Ts: 153), verbs (“chaperonar”<sup>54</sup>, Ts: 26; “greguerizar”, Ts: 80) and adverbs (“cursimente”, Ts: 28; “balenciagamente”, Ts: 162; “amanoladamente”, Ts: 273;...).
- **composition**: “abretaxi”, Ts: 233; “siempre-llevar”, Ts: 14; “precedente-oscilante”, Ts: 103; “alemán-ratón”, Ts: 83; “medio-besamanos”, Ts: 167; ...

<sup>54</sup> Suárez Granda fails to recognise this verb as a naturalisation of “to chaperone”.



- **naturalisation of foreign words:** from English (“mideluésticas”, Ts: 9 ...; “uanestep”, Ts: 47; “faruest”, Ts: 105; “icecream”, Ts: 218; ...) and French (“guacheado”, Ts: 30; “demimondanes”, Ts: 45; “ansisuatil”, Ts: 82; ...).
- **adoption of foreign words or expressions:** from (Greek “pathos”, Ts: 83; “pneuma”, Ts: 122; ...), Latin (“res nullius”, Ts: 69; “Deus ex machina”, Ts: 199; ...), French (“tableau noir”, Ts: 161; “Dieu et mon Droit”, Ts: 110; ...), English (“yearling”, Ts: 72; “gentleman-farmer”, Ts: 67; “full-time”, Ts: 164; ...), German (“weltanschauung”, Ts: 132; “Kindergarten”, Ts: 214; ...) and Italian (the only example he provides for this language, “bocato di cardinale”, Ts: 97, is, in fact, a pseudo-Italian expression), as well as regionalisms.

Suárez Granda also alludes to the prolific use of **scientific language** (“ectodérmica [...] mesodérmica”, Ts: 12; “propiedades organolépticas”, Ts: 92; “oviducto”, Ts: 105; ...), as well as **colloquialisms** and **slang** (“darse de naja”, Ts: 56; “pelés”, Ts: 55; “piñones”, Ts: 145; “chorbo”, Ts: 57; “alipori”, Ts: 196; “currelar”, Ts: 57; “diquelar”, Ts: 55; “fetén”, Ts: 14; ...).

The translation of neologisms, compounds, scientific language, colloquialisms and slang terms and expression does not present particular translatability problems. For the first two categories, the translator can use the freedom that the actual non-existence of those terms provides him/her with and create similar terms in English (for example, “polivinazo”<sup>55</sup> could become “polywinyl”<sup>56</sup>, “balenciagamente”<sup>57</sup> could be translated as “balenciagally”, “morbígenas”<sup>58</sup> as “morbigenic”, and so on). As far as the last three groups of terms are concerned, specialised dictionaries are available to solve most of the questions that may arise.

The words and expressions taken from other languages could be left in their foreign form in the target text. Those taken from the French and naturalised, can be adapted, so that they appear in the target text as naturalisations into English. However, those taken from English and naturalised into Spanish pose a more complicated question as

<sup>55</sup>See p. 167 for an explanation of this term.

<sup>56</sup>See, however, *ibid.* for Leeson’s rendition of this term.

<sup>57</sup>Balenciaga being a famous couturier, Leeson normalised the expression “Balenciagamente vestida” into “dressed by Balenciaga” (TS: 133).

<sup>58</sup>Leeson, once more, opted for naturalness of expression and translated this term simply as “morbid” (TS: 27).

to what to do with them in translation. The use of these expressions taken or adapted from the English responds to Martín-Santos' wish to establish a differentiation between Spain and those nations which were perceived to be culturally superior. We have to remember that this is the Spain that turned its back on Europe, the Spain of "que inventen ellos"<sup>59</sup>. As Juan Goytisolo reminisces in *El furgón de cola* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 1976; p. 261): "En esta época se prohibía el empleo de nombres extranjeros en comercios, cines, bares, etc." This gives us an idea of the radicalness of Martín-Santos' gesture: he was publicly rebelling against the convention of his time.

He used different methods in order to integrate these terms and expressions in his novel, as illustrated below. Leeson's versions are also given:

- He took some elements *verbatim*:
  - "gentleman-farmer" (Ts: 67) – (idem, TS: 55)
  - "yearling" (Ts: 72) – ("yearlings", TS: 58)
  - "shocking" (Ts: 87, 89) – (idem, TS: 71, 72)
  - "wagon-lit" (Ts: 105) – ("wagon-lit", TS: 85)
  - "cabin-log" (Ts: 105) – ("log cabin", TS: 85)
  - "cocina-dining-living" (Ts: 144) – ("kitchen-living-dining-room", TS: 118)
  - "clown" (Ts: 145) – (idem, TS: 119)
  - "full-time" (Ts: 164) – (idem, TS: 135)
  - "cocktail" (Ts: 167) – ("cocktail room", TS: 137)
  - "planning" (Ts: 174) – (idem, TS: 143)
  - "all-right" (Ts: 177) – (idem TS: 146)
- Others, he adapted, so that they are spelt (roughly) as they would be read in Spanish:
  - "niu dial" (Ts: 34) – ("New Deal", TS:26)
  - "uanstep" (Ts: 47) – ("one-step", TS: 37)
  - "faruest" (Ts: 105) – ("Far West", TS: 85)
  - "parti" (Ts: 218) – ("parties", TS: 180)
  - "aicecrim" (Ts: 218.) – ("ice-cream", 180)

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<sup>59</sup>This phrase, which became a cliché in the early period of Franco's dictatorship, summarises the effort to make a nation rejoice in its own underdevelopment and scorn any sign of progress as something alien and unnecessary.

- With others, he presented English words as if they were Spanish, with suffixes characteristic of this language:
  - “midleuésticas” (Ts: 9) – (“Midwestern”, TS: 5)
  - “pregnantes” (Ts: 12) – (“pregnant”, TS: 7)
  - “chaperonando” (Ts: 26) – (“chaperoning”, TS: 20)
  - “Muecasthone” (Ts: 67) – (“Muecas”, TS: 55)
- Finally, on some occasions, he translates literally from the English, producing an effect which is shocking for the native speaker of Spanish: “verdaderamente” (Ts: 44), for “really” or “honestly”, when the Spanish term in this context does not convey the idea of disapproval of the English (“o incluso - verdaderamente - fumar con dificultades un pitillo rubio...”, which was simplified by Leeson into: “or awkwardly smoke an American cigarette”, TS: 34). Martín-Santos also alludes to “grados Fahrenheit” (Ts: 53; simplified by Leeson into: “degrees”, TS: 42), when the scale of temperature used in Spain (except in certain scientific contexts) was, and still is, the Celsius, or centigrade, one.

For the first set of terms, the translator could add footnotes explaining that those terms appear in English in the original. The loss of the foreign element in the text would have to be accepted. In the case of the second set of terms, the translator can use a similar procedure, provided that s/he restores the native spelling of the terms. Thus, “niu deal” will appear in the target text as “new deal”, with a footnote reading, albeit not quite accurately, “In English in the original”. Another possibility is to use a different type face in the target text to indicate such terms, in which case the graphical forms used by Martín-Santos could be retained. Providing a solution for the translation of the last two sets of terms is not so straightforward. If those terms were to be translated into English (Leeson’s strategy), they would read as normal native ones: “middlewest”, “pregnant”, “chaperoning”, etc. If the translator were to translate “grados Fahrenheit” as “degrees Celsius”, an equivalent alien element would be introduced in the target text, but it could be perceived as a mistranslation, a failure to provide a natural conversion of the original term into its natural equivalent in English. Furthermore, the irony factor (Martín-Santos uses the foreign scale to refer to the temperature in the shanties during the winter months) would be missing.

As the examples above illustrate, Leeson favoured naturalness of expression above the preservation of a foreignising element in the text, which serves a thematic function in the source text. It seems that the translation loss in the case of these terms is

unavoidable. Although their occurrence in the source text is limited, the thematic element that they expand (namely, the inferiority of the Spanish culture in comparison with the anglo-saxon one) is an essential one and one which is present throughout the book. The mirroring and amplification of this theme by formal means were absent from the published translation.

A lexical peculiarity of the Spanish language, the existence of two different verbs, “*ser*” and “*estar*”, which are both translated by one single English verb, “to be”, also gives rise to translatability problems which are virtually impossible to solve. Its first appearance in the novel is part of a play on words to achieve a humoristic effect at the expense of German philosophy. The German painter gets involved in a pseudo-metaphysical discussion with Pedro and Matías, in the course of which he argues, “*pero tu corpo no está donde era*” (Ts: 84), which prompts the author to remark that the painter belongs to “*una raza más dotada para la estricta metafísica*” (ibid.). The published translation renders this passage as “ ‘But your corpus is not where it was,’ protested the German, who belonged to a race which is better equipped for pure metaphysics.” (TS: 68-69). The word-play is missing from the target text and, with it, the comic effect of the original. It seems that the pun cannot be translated satisfactorily, given the impossibility of “splitting” the meaning of the verb “to be”.

A similar situation occurs when Pedro is confronted with the dying Florita: “*Este no-ser-viva la materia, para el inquieto Don Pedro se le hacía un no-estar-viva que, en cualquier momento, podía producirse.*” (Ts: 134). Leeson opted for explanation as a translation procedure in this case: “This nonliving quality of the tissue gave the worried Don Pedro a feeling of imminent death.” (Ts: 110). However, the medical subtext of the word-play makes translation easier than the philosophical implications of the previous example. Compensation in place (keeping the verb “to be” in both sentence elements, as a translation of “*ser*” and “*estar*”, but altering the other component “*viva*”) is feasible in this case: “not-to-be-living” and “not-to-be-alive” could be used, respectively, as translations for “no-ser-viva” and “no-estar-viva”.

Other lexical items that pose translation difficulties are the opposition “*tú* (informal second person singular pronoun)/*usted* (formal second person singular pronoun)” and the use of titles. The question of the forms of address is a complicated one. The difference in tone, which is clear from the source text, is very difficult to depict in English, since this language, unlike many other European ones, has only one second person pronoun, *you*.

Several characters address Pedro as “usted”, for very different reasons: because he belongs to a superior socio-economical stratum (Amador, Muecas, Doña Luisa, who also reserves that treatment for Matías, and receives it, herself, from the prostitutes in the brothel she governs), out of conventional politeness (the boarding house’s owner, Dora, Matías’ mother), or to create a certain distance (the policemen, the Director of the Institute). Muecas’ daughters also use the formal pronoun to address their father, after a fashion which was very wide-spread in those years. Pedro uses the informal “tú” with Amador (his subordinate), Matías (his friend, who, in turn, uses this informal treatment with everybody) and Dorita (his girlfriend, who uses it too when talking to him), and addresses the rest of the characters as “usted”, if at all.

The translation loss seems inevitable in this case. The reader of the English translation will have to infer the relative status of the characters involved from the tone of the conversations. This adds pressure on the translator, who will have to make the relations between the characters clear without the evidence provided by the usage of one pronoun or the other. Such effect can be achieved by means of additional terms of address, such as *Sir* or *Madam*, as the case may be, in certain circumstances, or by the inclusion of adverbs (“she said respectfully”, “he replied haughtily”, etc.).

### 3.3. Syntactical level

Martín-Santos rejected a conventional division of the novel in chapters, and instead presented the content of the book in 63 unnumbered sections, of varying length and structure. Jean Tena (1980: 33) reveals the potentially cabalistic connotation of this choice:

63 est la combinaison de deux chiffres “magiques” classiques (3 x 3 x 7). [...] Claude Talahite fait remarquer que, dans la mythologie de l’Inde, la cité des dieux est représentée topographiquement par le *mandala* à soixante-quatre cases. Elle suggère que “Madrid -ville sans cathédrale- s’écrit en 63 paragraphes tout juste un de moins que les cases de la cité des dieux”. On peut ajouter que, dans les pages finales du roman, Pedro revient à plusieurs reprises sur le thème du jeu d’échecs [...] l’échiquier comporte 64 cases et ce nombre symbolise la réalisation de l’unité cosmique. 63, c’est donc la perfection presque atteinte mais irrémédiablement gâchée...

Whether or not this interpretation is accurate, it is clear that the arrangement of the content of *Tiempo de silencio* stems from a conscious decision and it should be



respected as such in any translation. The published English translation of the novel shows nevertheless many more subdivisions, probably in an attempt to facilitate the reading by shortening the paragraphs and presenting dialogues in the conventional form. This deprives the reader of the possibility of perceiving a kind of subtext whose importance within the novel cannot be underestimated.

Leaving aside the strictly presentational, the critics have concentrated their attention on the lavishness of Martín-Santos' prose. They all coincide in that the extraordinary elaboration of the style goes beyond a mere aesthetic concern. Perhaps the best study is that of Labanyi, who sees the subconscious as censored text and claims that, therefore, a Freudian analysis of language "es fundamental para comprender *Tiempo de silencio*" (1985: 132). According to her, "Martín-Santos recurre a la paráfrasis para parodiar el «tabú del nombre» oficial, pero el uso de un estilo verboso también muestra cómo el lenguaje, de por sí, erige una barrera entre el hombre y la realidad." (ibid.).

It seems ironic that in a novel entitled *Tiempo de silencio* language is very much the protagonist. It is possible that Martín-Santos found his inspiration in Kierkegaard's notion that truth requires silence before raising its voice again, from *The Concept of Irony* (quoted in Roberts, 1973: 203) when choosing a title for his novel. The official silence, the silence imposed by a dictatorial regime, is broken with a dazzling flow of words. J. Labanyi interprets this apparent paradox as a defence mechanism: "El silencio del conformismo no consiste en la ausencia de palabras, sino en la proliferación de las palabras para erigir una muralla defensiva entre el hombre y la realidad." (1985: 141). Other authors have seen in this a reflection of the fundamental isolation of the individual. Burunat (1980: 179) observes: "Lo apretado de la prosa da idea de la incomunicación entre los seres." For J. Riezu (1980: 93:), "el estilo es la expresión directa del personaje, de su peculiaridad psíquica y de su pertinencia social." It is through style that the barriers between the characters (especially between Pedro and the others) are erected.

*Tiempo de silencio* (like *London Fields*) is fraught with enumerations (see, for instance the description of Madrid and its people, Ts: 15-19) and other rhetorical figures that make it into a rather monotonous, iterative text:

- Repetitions: " "Oye", digo. "Diga", dice " (Ts: 14 and 15); "ya no es de pueblo, que ya no pareces de pueblo, hombre, que cualquiera diría que eres de pueblo y

que más valía que nunca hubieras venido del pueblo porque eres como de pueblo, hombre” (Ts: 19).

- Triplets, of which we could quote, “tras alta reflexión, tras cálculos de coeficientes, del crossing-over y determinación de mapas genéticos. Tras implantación...” (Ts: 11), in which two triple structures are entwined; “Sólo esta cepa [...]. Sólo en ella [...]. Sólo ella...”, Ts: 13 ; “una tal [...], una tal [...], una tan...” (Ts: 14). Jean Tena (1980: 33) affirms that “L’ensemble du roman propose au moins *trois cents* de ces structures”, and suggests that “[l]’imprégnation ternaire” has its roots in Dante’s *La Divina Commedia*.
- Opposites: “llenas de hombres serios cuando son importantes y simpáticos cuando no son importantes” (Ts: 16); “de iglesias cerradas y tabernas abiertas” (Ts: 77).

This somewhat rambling style, Martín-Santos’ “verbo retórico y alambicado” (Clotas, 1970: 10), is an essential element in the book, from a quantitative point of view, and also it bears relation to many thematic aspects, such as the socio-political satire in the novel and the configuration of its characters. The translator would have to be constantly on guard, because, as Labanyi (1985: 141) remarked, “Estar atento al sentido literal de las palabras [in *Tiempo de silencio*], en general significa entenderlas mal.”

Many other critics have drawn attention to the satirical element in *Tiempo de silencio*, which acts as a link between the content and the form. Clotas (1970: 9) observes that sarcasm “informa todo el libro, tanto desde el punto de vista temático como el estilístico”, and J. Riezu (1980: 106 ff.) analyses the critical function of language distortion through sarcasm. J.C. Mainer (1980: 58) sees a reflection of the intellectual debate of the time in the sarcastic component in the novel: “mucho del estilo sarcástico de ambos libros [*Tiempo de silencio* and *Tiempo de destrucción*] suena ineluctablemente a humorismo oral, a declamación de tertulia intelectual”.

From all this it is clear that the dizzy style, the “prosa vertiginosa” (Gil-Casado, 1968: 288) of *Tiempo de silencio*, answers to an intention that is both political and aesthetic. It cannot be analysed singly as a mechanism for dodging censorship in presenting the grim social scenario of the 1940’s in Spain, or as a literary device which would remove the author from the prevailing trend of realism in the novel. In the style of *Tiempo de silencio*, both factors are inextricably joined and as such they should be

reproduced in translation. Condensation, simplification, clarification are not procedures that can be used freely in the translation of this novel, otherwise its deep meaning is at risk of being lost in the target text. George Leeson, however, took certain liberties in his translation of *Tiempo de silencio* in English, which dilute the strong stylistic awareness of the original text. Some examples of the techniques that he used are listed below:

- **reduction:** “en las hijas del Muecas hay una tal dulzura ayuntadora, una tal amamantadora perspicacia, una tal genesíaca propiedad que sus efluvios...”, Ts: 14>>“is there a kind of soft mammary perspicacity in Muecas’ two daughters, such a genetic property that the smell which emanates from them is enough to [...]?” , TS: 9.
- **simplification:** “agarbanzadas leguminosas”, Ts: 8>>“chick peas”, TS: 4.
- **diversification:** “ya no es vida, sino engaño, engaño”, Ts: 9>>“is no longer life, but a delusion and a deception”, TS: 5.
- **inversion:** “De cómo la Genética [...] ha podido llegar a un resultado totalmente opuesto [...], Amador no tiene ni idea”, Ts: 13>>“But Amador has no idea of how the genetic process...”, TS: 8.
- **completion:** “como si todavía nosotros a pesar de la desesperación, a pesar de los créditos.” Ts: 8>>“as though we could win through in spite of our desperation and our lack of funds.”, TS: 4.
- **complete change:** “Si no habría que parar”, Ts: 13>>“There’s no end to them”, TS: 9.

These examples seem to illustrate not mere translation losses, but losses which, arguably, are *added* to the translation, due to, it would appear, a wish to round up, to polish or to perfect the original.

There is a very strong stylistic trait in *Tiempo de silencio* which poses serious translatability problems: the influence of the English language. This influence ranges from the presentation of some dialogues between inverted commas and the creation of new terms, both features mentioned above, to the distortion of the Spanish syntax by

anglicisation. The work of Morán (1971) casts some light on this issue. He analyses what he calls “la conciencia del semidesarrollo”. This awareness of cultural underdevelopment is mirrored in *Tiempo de silencio*: the thematic components are elaborated in function of the terms acquired from more developed cultural systems.

In *Tiempo de silencio* we find abundant use of the passive voice in its absolute form (“ser” in any of its conjugated forms followed by a past participle), a construction rarely used in Spanish: “Ninguna de estas mujeres era advertida por Pedro” (Ts: 32), “Estas jaulas habían sido obtenidas” (Ts: 65), “la mañana de la familia muequil era alegrada por los juveniles píos” (Ts: 67), etc. Leeson chose translation strategies which shift the original emphasis (“Don Pedro noticed none of these women...”, TS: 25), or help elucidate certain aspects of the source text which appear to be deliberately obscure (“The cages had been recovered...”, TS: 52; “the following morning was enlivened for the Muecas family by the chirping of the young mice”, TS: 54). Thus, the result departs from the stylistic idiosyncrasy of the source text.

In *Tiempo de silencio* there are also frequent inversions of the typical noun + adjective pattern, in favour of an anglicised structure: “nunca sexualmente satisfechas” (Ts:10), “en un dado momento” (Ts: 94), “el próximo cine” (Ts: 95), “la platónica caverna” (Ts: 233), etc. Leeson’s translations do not depart from the English norm: “sex-starved” (TS: 6), “at a given moment” (TS: 76), “nearby movie theatre” (TS: 77), “the Platonic cave” (TS: 93). The stylistic, and ideological, intention behind the source text is, once more, absent from the target text.

Omission of a determiner is a common feature in English. Some sentences in *Tiempo de silencio* border on the agrammatical in that they introduce this feature into the Spanish language: “Reproducciones [...] pueden haberse producido” (Ts: 11), “Mujeres también bajaban y otras subían por la cuesta” (Ts: 32), etc. Leeson’s renditions (“Reproduction may have occurred...” [TS: 7], “There were women in the crowd going up and down the hill” [TS: 25]), on the other hand, do not stand out in the target text, because they conform to English syntactical rules.

Occasionally, Martín-Santos superimposes English syntax to his text: he appears to translate parts of the discourse literally from English, which are then inserted into the Spanish text. Leeson consistently normalises the source text, and, as a consequence, its farfetched, unnatural tone becomes lost in translation. For example:

- possessive adjective + present participle  
     “yacerá en **su orinando**, **gritando**, **devorando...**” (Ts: 282)  
     (“which would wet itself and cry and drain...”, TS: 236)
- “*in that*” as a causal conjunction  
     “La casa entera vive, **en que** hay tantos cuerpos acostados.” (Ts: 114)  
     (“The whole house was alive with sleeping bodies.”, TS: 93)
- absolute construction as an adverbial complement  
     “**Vaso de fuerte bebida en mano**, chasqueaba la lengua...” (Ts: 67)  
     (“Holding a glass of strong liqueur in his hand, he clicked his tongue...”, TS: 55)

At times, Martín-Santos translates certain structures literally from the English, hence not only introducing a foreign element in the source text, but stretching the limits of the Spanish language beyond first-reading comprehension: “gastar la tarde entera” (Ts: 17), “retrasadamente contestaba” (Ts: 32), or “cuya la casa era” (Ts: 150). In these cases, a word-by-word translation, as provided by Leeson (“spend the whole evening” [TS: 12], “belatedly replied” [TS: 25], “whose home it was” [TS: 123]), results in normal English collocations and structures. The rupture with the rules (both grammatical and political) which was apparent from the source text is thus translated into a conventional form of expression.

The translation into English of such elements of the discourse in *Tiempo de silencio* is very easy in itself. Too easy, in fact, given the concomitance of the source text elements with elements characteristic of the target language. Thus, we are confronted with a situation in which translation itself presupposes a loss, since the strangeness that obscures the source text disappears in the target text. A foreignisation of the English text would be only a partial answer to this problem. If it were carried out, the readers of the target text would perceive the same sense of “strangeness” as those of the source text, but the true significance of the original feature, the implicit comparison between cultures and the welcoming of foreign models, would be lost.

What seems to be at stake here is, once more, authorial intentionality. With the anglicisation of his prose, Martín-Santos wanted to achieve a more complex effect than mere linguistic obscurity or stylistic elaboration. He imposed English patterns onto his novel and, in doing so, he was making a literary statement. He was driving a wedge between his work and post-war Spanish literature. Martín-Santos was breaking away



from tradition by introducing into the Spanish novel the foreign models he admired. J.C. Mainer (1973: 16) states that Martín-Santos effects “una adaptación de lo que podríamos llamar las fuentes del estilo de Joyce a los recursos de la lengua española”. However, it is the opposite phenomenon that can be seen in *Tiempo de silencio*: the author violates the principles of Spanish, and imposes onto it the chosen foreign patterns. The sources that Mainer mentions are not adapted to the Spanish language, it is the Spanish language that is forced to adapt itself to those sources, as has been shown above. Reproducing the nuances of his admired Joyce’s native language in his own vernacular is a very effective way of giving shape to his dissatisfaction with the state of the Spanish novel and, also, of paying homage to the literature of those countries which he considered to be culturally more fruitful and advanced.

Morán (1971) interprets the use of anglicisms (both lexical and syntactic) in a different key. He sees in them a satirical reference to the fact that the textbooks of that time were written in English. This would clearly account for certain specific examples, namely, those used in a scientific context, but not for all of them. Many lexical items are used in relation to social or recreational elements (“cocina-dining-living”, “aicecrim”, “uanstep”, “cocktail”, etc.), and, although certain syntactic structures could be interpreted as a sarcastic reference to bad translations (the “abuse” of the passive voice, for example), their pervasiveness suggests that they were not extracted from the limited content of textbooks. But, regardless of the reason for their appearance in *Tiempo de silencio*, this is what an English version of the novel cannot reflect. The anglicisation of the prose as a tribute to anglo-saxon culture and as a political protest against a regime which had deprived the country of some of its most enlightened minds (one has to remember here that the novel opens with an allusion to Ramón y Cajal, the Spanish scientist who became a Nobel laureate only after he had emigrated to the USA) is impossible to reproduce in English.

#### 4. Summary

The main difficulty which arises from reproducing the style of a certain piece of literature in translation is an unavoidable loss in language itself. There cannot be an accurate reproduction of the source text in the target language simply because the matter with which the original author works is different from that with which the translator works. Independently of the problems which the translation of, for example, rhythmic features may pose, factors such as word-length or the patterns of syntactical

distribution will change the way in which the target text is presented with respect to the way in which the source text was produced.

As far as *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* are concerned, matters are further complicated by the importance which both authors granted to the style in which the novels were written. In the case of the latter, the duplication of one of its thematic elements (the superiority of anglo-saxon culture, as explained above) by means of specific stylistic features, makes the reproduction of the text in English even more difficult. The interlinking of form and content in both novels complicates matters further. Senn's words (in Snell Hornby & Pöhl, 1989: 79) appear to be very relevant in the instance of these two texts: "The 'message' is inseparable from its wording. Sound, word order, repetition, grammatical structure--they all contribute to the sense."

The translator of *London Fields* is confronted with the arduous task of presenting the verbosity and artifice of Martin Amis' prose to the readers of the target text. The hyper-elaboration of the text encompasses all its levels: the graphic/phonetic, the lexical and the syntactical. However, the vast majority of the devices he resorts to can be translated or compensated, as has been indicated above. The main difficulty lies, therefore, in keeping up with the rhythm of the novel in the translation. Simplification or clarification procedures affect the very essence of this novel, since it is clear that it is style and not content that takes the foreground in *London Fields*.

The case of *Tiempo de silencio* is a more complex one. If Martin Amis can be considered to believe in art for art's sake to a large extent (although he claims that style provides moral directions), Luis Martín-Santos had additional objectives in mind. His preoccupation with style arises equally from an aesthetic concern and a social one. Rey rejects almost completely the aesthetic impulse behind Martín-Santos' prose: "La originalidad lingüística de *Tiempo de silencio* no obedece, por lo general, a razones ornamentales, sino estructurales." (1977: 130). However, as well as the political subtext, we also have to consider the artistic one: Martín-Santos reacted against the literary fashion of his time and opted for opening a new route for the Spanish novel.

Given the political situation in Spain when this novel was published, Martín-Santos had no choice but to disguise his political satire, since repression and censorship mechanisms would condition and control every instance of artistic manifestation. As Curutchet mentioned (1973: 33), "su ataque [...] se manifiesta como cualidad del estilo, y sólo incidentalmente como deliberación del concepto". The satire in the novel

arises from the chasm between reality and its expression: it has to be read between the lines. This seems to be a very appropriate metaphor in this instance: the translator would have to preserve the nature of the lines in translation, so that the message coded “between” them could appear as evident in the target text as it does in the source text.

But the difficulties which arise from the translation of this novel into English are sometimes insurmountable. J.L. Suárez Granda (1986: 119) quoted José Luis Torres Murillo (“Libros”, *El Diario Vasco*, San Sebastián, 5/6/62) describing the language of *Tiempo de silencio* in the following terms: “Es un lenguaje como «traducido»...”. In *Tiempo de silencio* we have a source text that reads sometimes like a translation and, more frequently than not, a translation from English. The difficulty of reproducing this effect in English is obvious, and the result is that the target text will be lacking in the cultural subtext that has been analysed above.

## Chapter 3: Linguistic Varieties

### 1. Regional dialects

The main difficulty that the translation of foreign dialects poses is that these dialects are variations of the source language, which, by definition, is absent from the target text.

Some translators resort to dialectal forms belonging to the target culture when regional linguistic variations appear in the source text, in order to produce a similar effect. For instance, J.M. Valverde, in his translation of *Ulysses*, by James Joyce, (Barcelona: Bruguera, 1983, 9th ed.) makes a Scottish character use some stereotypical forms of the Asturian dialect, to maintain some vernacular peculiarity in his speech: “Lang may your lum reek and your kailpot boil!” (*Ulysses*, Penguin: 1986; p. 347) is translated as “Por muchus años eche humu tu chimenea y hierva tu pucheru” (vol. II, p. 73). This appropriative approach could be seen to jeopardise the very identity of the character or characters concerned. What the reader of the target text would find is an identifiably foreign character, moving in a (generally) foreign context who speaks with a voice that clearly does not befit his/her identity.

It can be argued that this is always the case in translated literature. However, a moderate use of terms which deviate from the norm of the language used in each case, maybe in conjunction with some compensation devices (introducing in the target text phrases like “he said in his X accent”, for instance) when required by the context, is an alternative solution to this problem. A practical consideration corroborates this: translators may not have such a sufficient grasp of geographical dialects that would enable them to carry out their task in such a way.

In the specific case of the two texts which are being dealt with here, *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, geographical dialects do not call for drastic translation procedures, each for its own reasons, as will be detailed below.

## 1.1. *London Fields*

The question of the authorial presence--who is writing this book and why and what does he feel about it?--has been a subject, or a sub-subject, in most of Amis' novels. The concern is familiar in recent fiction and many English writers seem to adopt it to appear vogue-ish. They nod to European masters such as Calvino and Grass with each ironic intervention from the oh-so-knowing narrator. With Amis, however, the obsession seems built in. (Richard Rayner, *The Sunday Telegraph*, 17 September 1989)

### 1.1.1. Samson Young

*London Fields* is a first-person narrative. Samson Young, a North-American writer tormented by his own creative incapacity, is the one who tells the story. The authorial voice, therefore, does not coincide with the narrative voice, at least in theory. Martyn Harris does not hesitate to declare that "Sam is simply a cipher for the authorial presence" (*New Statesman and Society*, 23 September 1989). In relation with the issue of authorial presence, Richard Todd's statement (1987: 135), although referring to the narrator of *Money*, also applies in the particular instance of *London Fields*:

in devising a voice for John Self, [...] Martin Amis has, it seems to me, quite explicitly chosen to use his own, a voice that is clearly recognizable from his own other published fiction.

According to Todd, resort to authorial intrusion in postmodern fiction, of which the interferences of the novelist's voice with that of the internal narrator are an example, responds to a wish to face up to what he calls "solipsistic closure", a threat "particularly urgent in contemporary fiction in Britain because of the perceived weight and multiplicity of traditional approaches to realism" (ibid.).

Martin Amis himself explained in declarations to an interviewer of the *International Herald Tribune* (22 January 1990):

I want to look for the comic possibilities of authorial intrusion. I have this subconscious anxiety about giving my characters such a bad time that I thought I might appear and try as it were to make it up to my characters. But it doesn't work out that way and I'm just an additional tormentor to my characters. But of course I'm the main tormentor anyway.



It seems justifiable to accept the existence of a calculated aim in the interferences of the external narrator's voice with that of Samson Young, since such interferences are too frequent and substantial to be considered as the result of carelessness or narrative mistakes, which are not substantiated by any other examples. On the contrary, *London Fields* is an eminent example of the hyper-elaboration that characterises Martin Amis' stories.

Samson Young explains his familiarity with thoughts and events of which he does not have first-hand knowledge by means of his being the recipient of written material belonging to the main characters (Nicola's diaries, Keith's darts notes and publicity brochure, and Guy's fiction and poems), and the numerous conversations between these and their acquaintances (for instance, Auxiliadora, the Clinch's cleaning-lady). In the first chapter of the novel, he muses, "People are amazing, aren't they? They'll tell you everything if you give them time" (LF: 13). However, there appear in *London Fields* many episodes, such as Guy's recollections, the dialogues between Keith and Kath, or details from Nicola's life, to which Young cannot possibly have had access. It is in the passages in which these events are recounted that authorial intrusion becomes more obvious.

In a flourish typical of his narrative style, Martin Amis christens the British writer with whom Samson Young temporarily exchanges his New York apartment as Mark Asprey, whose *alter ego* in a pseudo-autobiographical novel is Marius Appleby, that is, doubly MA, or *Martin Amis*<sup>60</sup>. Although this is no coincidence, the reference is less clear that the one in *Money*, a novel in which Martin Amis introduces himself<sup>61</sup> as one of his own fictional creations. In declarations to *City Limits* (21-28 September 1989), the author himself admits drawing back from such excesses on account of literary decorum and credibility: "In this novel [*London Fields*] I play it pretty straight [...] It's not as outrageous as having myself as a minor character, as I do in *Money*".

In any case, his presence in the novel through the persona of Samson Young seems obvious. It seems a reasonable assumption that, as to narrative voice, Samson Young and Martin Amis are the same man. Thus, the question arises of why the latter chose a North-American citizen for the narrator of his novel. David Sexton believes that "He [Samson Young] provides Amis with an excuse to Americanise his diction while still

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<sup>60</sup> Doubles are a recurring feature in Martin Amis' fiction.

<sup>61</sup> Under a somewhat idealised disguise.

writing about Westbourne Park" (*The Sunday Correspondent*, 17 September 1989). Nevertheless, Martin Amis' style had been described as "mid-Atlantic" on several occasions prior to the publication of *London Fields*. James Wolcott went as far as stating that "with *Money* Amis's style had become a mite *too* transatlantic" (*Vanity Fair*, March 1990). Furthermore, as will be shown below (see p. 93), the americanisation of the narrative is minimal.

The most immediate motivation for making the fictional narrator of the novel American has a thematic nature: some form of link between the Old and the New Worlds is needed in *London Fields*. Wolcott, in his review of the novel (*ibid.*), wrote: "*London Fields* isn't a little island novel. It's a superpower novel, with wide wingspan and major cargo". The United States of America loom as the super power that can bring about a nuclear catastrophe of planetary dimensions--the "Crisis" which provides the political background to the action. It is worth bearing in mind that the writing of *London Fields* started in 1984, before the end of the Cold War between the former USSR and her allies, on one side, and the USA and hers, on the other. Martin Amis drolly complained, "Gorbachev interfered with the writing of my book" (*City Limits*, 21-29 September 1989).

England, and more specifically London, is the habitual setting of Martin Amis's novels, a setting that Harry Ritchie described as "the customary Amis territory of putrescent pub, street squalor, nightmarish entropy" (*The Sunday Times*, 10 September 1989). The result is what Allan Massie called a "tawdry landscape of a trash-civilisation" (*The Scotsman*, 23 September 1989). After all, this is an urban novel, a novel that revolves in its entirety around a city, and, in Martin Amis's own words, "cities are very mysterious and frightening places" (in *Contemporary Authors*, 1988: 23).

Some critics consider the americanisation of this novel obvious. For instance, James Wolcott states: "The jazzy jism of his [Martin Amis'] prose, the jukebox rotation of his riffs, his industrial strength sarcasms and automatic wisecracks, all of these seem smuggled in from the noisy New World" (*Vanity Fair*, March 1990). The peculiarities imposed on *London Fields* by the fact that Martin Amis chose Samson Young to recount his story cannot hide the stylistic techniques that recur in all of his novels. And it is these techniques that have to be reproduced in the target text, since they are far more relevant than an inconsistent characterisation of the narrator as an American,

and, therefore, a member of a culture which is different from the one portrayed in the novel.

Samson Young's familiarity with the varieties of British English which he uses throughout his narrative is rather implausible. As Melvyn Bragg points out, "The 'author', Samson Young (American), is rather unlikely (...) to know such detail of Eng. Lang, Eng. Slang, Eng. Slob, Eng. Lit, Eng. Nuance" (*The Listener*, 21 September 1989). Departure from standard English forms only happens in instances that are few and far between ("red eye", LF: 1; "gotten", LF: 14, etc.; "faucet", LF: 61). The appearance of lexical and orthographic forms as characteristically British as "kitchen taps" (LF: 2), "metre" (LF: 11) or "colour" (ibid.), as well as the prepositional alternation "in/on the street" prove that Martin Amis was not systematic in the linguistic characterisation of Samson Young, conceivably in order to signal his omniscience as a narrator.

If a translator wanted to mark this dialectal variation by using a similar differentiation in Spanish, s/he would have to make use of South-American forms (in a hypothetical linguistic equation, South-American Spanish is to Peninsular Spanish what North-American English is to British English). Although this would certainly establish a differentiation between the narrator's discourse and that of the English characters, the main effect it would achieve is the alienation of Samson Young from the anglophone context to which he belongs. Moreno chose to translate Young's speech with no dialectal features, and the losses implicit in the use of this strategy are amply compensated by contextual information in the target text. In any case, as David Sexton somehow maliciously remarks, "*London Fields*, like Amis's other novels, ends up being about who tells the story. It's 'who's the biggest novelist of them all?' yet again" (*The Sunday Correspondent*, September 1989).

## 1.2. *Tiempo de silencio*

Regional dialects do not pose any serious translatability problems in *Tiempo de silencio*. The number of characters endowed with a voice in this novel is comparatively restricted, and all of them belong to the same geographical context (either born or resident there), although, as it will be seen later (see section 2.2 of this chapter), their respective modes of speech are strongly conditioned by the social stratification in Madrid in the late 1940's.

The temporal localisation of *Tiempo de silencio* is a period of Spanish history when society, emerging from the turmoil of the Civil War, was undergoing a radical transformation. After the conflict, the predictable social consequences (such as the “brain-drain” and the restoration to landowners, the catholic church and the aristocracy of the economic and public power of which they had been deprived during the Second Republic), coexisted with other changes, that were the fruit of historical development rather than of specific events. Spain became an industrial society.

Since the turn of the century, there had been in Spain a clear division between the strong bourgeoisie and emerging industrial proletariat of Catalonia and the Basque Country, on one hand, and the rural population of the rest of the country, on the other. The economic miracle of the early 1960’s was preceded by two decades of growth unprecedented in modern Spanish history. The most immediate social consequence of this growth was a massive exodus from the countryside to the cities. Madrid became a metropolis unique in Europe: in the words of Raymond Carr (1980: 158), “a city surrounded by a demographic desert”. It attracted thousands of immigrants from the poorer areas, who sometimes became even worse-off there than they had been in their native regions. This is the scenario presented in *Tiempo de silencio*.

José Carlos Mainer, in the Preface to his critical edition of *Tiempo de destrucción*, Martín-Santos’ unfinished novel (1975: 18) mentions “el miedo a la meseta - uno de tantos símbolos de castración que [...] surgen en el libro...”. The author’s concern with geographical barriers within Spain is also patent, from a very early stage, in *Tiempo de silencio*, in the form of allusions to dialects, or different accents: Madrid cannot “hablar su idioma con la recta entonación llana que le dan los pueblos situados hacia el norte a doscientos kilómetros de ella” (Ts: 12); later, the reader encounters some disreputable characters who “hablaban andaluz” (Ts: 27).

Such differences present social implications, since they are determined by economic factors, immigration being the most obvious of these: “authentic”, born-and-bred *madrileños* tinge their speech with inflections that are alien to any other form of Castilian, to the standard form of the language, as spoken by the people of remote, impoverished areas. All those who, in this novel, retain the peculiarities of their vernacular language or dialect in the capital city (such as the Andalusians, mentioned above, and the Galicians and Asturians who will appear later in the text; see Ts: 286) are immediately identified as marginal groups, as the underprivileged who have arrived in Madrid searching for what their native regions could not provide.

These allusions to regional varieties of the Spanish language, which corroborate the role of Spain's capital city as a social melting pot, do not pose translatability problems *per se*, as proven by the straightforward versions that appear in the English published edition of *Tiempo de silencio*: "incapable of speaking its own language with the correct intonation as it is spoken in villages a hundred miles to the north" (TS: 11); "they all spoke with an Andalusian accent" (TS: 21). These are, however, pale renditions of the original: "recta entonación llana" is not equal to "correct intonation" (the mere existence of a "correct" intonation in this sense is arguable), and "hablar andaluz" has stronger connotations than "to speak with an Andalusian *accent* [emphasis added]".

Obviously, there is a difference between translating references to dialect and translating dialect itself. Nevertheless, from a cultural point of view, the occurrence of such mentions is relevant to translation. The readers of the English text may well not be aware of the stigma attached to certain regional accents in post-war Madrid, whereas this stigma will appear evident to any educated reader of the source text. The context lends, as ever, a helpful hand to the translator, because all these characters are shown in the confinement of their underclass milieu: ill-famed taverns, undesirable jobs, etc. There is always the risk that some readers of the target text may be carried away by romantic, mostly inaccurate, notions of Spanish flamenco dancers, and the exoticism of the peninsular South, but there is very little that the translator can do to prevent people from projecting their own convictions, or prejudices, upon the text.

In the light of what has just been expounded, it seems reasonable to state that no special linguistic translation difficulty arises in such instances. What we are confronted with here is an instance of partially-failed transcultural communication. And the failure is only partial because the reader of the target text will find it easy to identify the connotations of those regional language variations, even when the author has chosen to omit all textual representation of these dialects, perhaps in an attempt to mirror in his book the insignificance of their speakers' social role in the metropolis.

## 2. *Sociolects*

To say that the United Kingdom is a class-ridden society has become a cliché. The differences between classes are said to be exacerbated in the British context. From an educational point of view, the existence of a public school and Oxbridge élite



corroborates this. Also, traditionally, social position was determined by occupation: the working classes provide manual labour, the middle classes carry out white-collar and entrepreneurial activities and the upper classes generally only supply capital<sup>62</sup>.

On the other hand, this society has been branded “classless” by some contemporary sociologists, in spite of social differences. Marshall *et al.* (1988), for instance, state that the concept of class is obsolete in modern Britain, arguing that consumption habits take preference over distinctions in the nature of labour provided. An individual’s aspirations and the nature of the goods and services that they purchase thus become the new measure of social differentiation.

Martin Amis plays between these two poles, relishing the contradiction, and carries stereotypes to the extreme. Class barriers (or the lack thereof), are used in *London Fields* as yet another stylistic device. In this mimicry of English society, the social gaps are manipulated to serve better the author’s purposes: the millionaire befriends the yob, the aristocracy comes into contact with the underworld. However, everybody retains their own identity, which manifests itself through language and linguistic variety.

In the previous section there has been an outline of the social changes that were brought about by Franco’s regime and of how Madrid had become an unusual metropolis. Martín-Santos uses this melting-pot to present and contrast social difference. The new social configuration finds its mirror in the frustrated intellectual (Pedro), the upper class (Matías’s family and their acquaintances), the lower middle-class (at the *pensión*), the first generation of immigrants seeking their fortune in the capital (Amador) and the underclass, the outcasts (the inhabitants of the shanties).

## 2.1. *London Fields*

### 2.1.1. Keith Talent

I don’t think I can get any lower than Keith.  
(Martin Amis, *Time Out*, 13-20 September 1989)

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<sup>62</sup>However, one has to bear in mind that the position of the boundary between the middle and upper classes is ambiguous.

Following the publication of *London Fields*, most critics agreed that Keith Talent's is not only the most felicitous characterisation in this novel, but also one of the greatest achievements in Martin Amis' fiction. Melvyn Bragg claims in *The Listener* (21 September 1989), "In his radical ambivalence, he [Keith] may be Martin Amis' best creation yet". Kingsley Amis himself paid a tacit homage to this creation of his son's in *The Folks That Live on the Hill* (Bath: Chivers Press, 1990). In the seventh chapter of this novel, a gasman appears, called Keith, who boasts many of the linguistic idiosyncrasies of the character with the same name in *London Fields*, however curtailed: " 'Are you Keith?' she asked. 'Yeah, cheers.' " (p. 83); "What? All right, cheers." (ibid.).

Martin Amis admitted in an interview published in *City Limits* (21-28 September 1989) that he had to expurgate to a certain extent his characterisation of Keith Talent, whose original version, apparently, went beyond the boundaries of literary decorum, this being the only form of decorum that the author claims to observe in his writings: "I bowdlerised Keith a fair bit. There were some things I thought were just too base. I want him to be just about a lovable rogue".

Richard Rayner described Keith as "the hilarious apotheosis of the gruesome yob who has been present in each Amis novel" (*The Sunday Telegraph*, 17 September 1989). Martyn Harris also defines him as "a typical Amis superyob" (*New Statesman and Society* 23 September 1989). And yet, Keith Talent represents an evolution in respect to his predecessors (Norman, in *The Rachel Papers*; Keith Whitehead, in *Dead Babies*; Terry, in *Success*; Russ, in *Other People*), in that he embodies the sublimation of the most deplorable traits in each of them. Among all Martin Amis' anti-heroes, the one that stands closest to Talent is John Self, the main character in *Money*, and its narrator. Anthony Quinn observes in *The Irish Times* (21 September 1989), "his [Keith's] daily round of darting, boozing, eating, rutting and cheating are detailed with the same appalled verve the author spent on John Self in his masterpiece, *Money*. There is also an hilarious rerun of the yob-takes-on-literature sequence..."

As the narrator of the story, Samson Young confesses that he finds severe difficulty in transcribing the accent of this *lovable rogue*: "I wish to Christ I could do Keith's voice" (LF: 26). Guy, as his fictional comrade, does not have it easy either: "he often had trouble with Keith's tenses" (LF: 153). Keith's voice consists, in the words of Ian Hislop, of "a brand new language constructed from darts commentaries, tabloid

headlines, brand-names of luxuries and obscenities. It perfectly defines the narrow range of emotions that he needs and is both pathetic and funny" (*Literary Review*, September 1989). Martin Amis insists that he extracted the basis for this peculiar mode of speech from real life: "I watch football a lot--the post-match interview is a useful source. You soak it up. Sometimes, if I need just one detail I go down to the pub" (*The Sunday Times*, 10 September 1989).

The author gives us an insight into Keith's diary-cum-darts-notebook on page 177 of *London Fields*. Writing is a recently acquired skill for Keith, and his incompetence in this art is made patent in his first forays into autobiographical penmanship: "You could have a house so big you could have several dart board areas in it, not just won."

A befitting translation of Keith's idiolect would appear to be of paramount importance within the novel, since this is the main element of his characterisation and serves to establish a differentiation from the rest of the protagonists. His speech combines features of the Cockney dialect<sup>63</sup> and crook's slang. Regional dialect and sociolect combine thus to result in a highly peculiar mode of expression, which identifies Keith both *socially* and *intellectually*. In the words of his creator, "unbookish people can't give any shape to what they think" (in Haffenden, 1985: 8).

According to Peter Newmark (1988: 157), when the translator is confronted with a dialectal variety, "The important thing is to produce naturally slangy, possibly classless speech in moderation, hinting at the dialect, "processing" only a small proportion of the source language dialect words [...] bad grammar and "mispronunciation" (faulty spelling) [...] are irrelevant in a dialect, which is a self-contained variety of language, not a deviation from standard language." Carrying this theory into practice in this specific case would pose serious difficulties, since the virtual totality of Keith's speech consists of elements that imply a deviation from the norm in one way or another. "*Processing*" only a few of them would mean to deprive Keith of his own voice and idiosyncrasy in the target text.

Keith's favourite expressions are "Yeah, cheers", "as such", "innit", "Yo!", "Oi!", "same difference", and "appreciate it". He uses them at all times, indiscriminately. Some examples of the very personal way in which he uses language include: "I'll pop

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<sup>63</sup> In *London Fields* there can also be found an example of *rhyming slang*, a linguistic feature traditionally associated with Cockneys, which consists of the expression of a concept by means of another concept, whose lexical forms rhyme, although they are not linked semantically (see page 202).

in on me mum. [...] She's sick like." (LF: 11); "Show respect. Even if it's just some old boiler. Comes to us all as such." (LF: 38); "You don't never show no disrespect for the darts, okay?" (LF: 100); "Can't. Watching TV innit." (LF: 166); "All they got here's a load of fukim porp pies!" (LF: 249); "Don't fuckin say phankyou, whoah ya!" (LF: 335). From these examples follows that phonetic irregularities are numerous, and that both cohesion and coherence are practically nonexistent. Moreno's translations, however, abide by grammatical rules and, occasionally show a more formal register: "Voy a parar a hacer una corta visita a mi madre. [...] Está enferma." (CL: 23); "Muestra de respeto. Aunque fuera una vieja urraca. A todos nos llega." (CL: 56); "No vuelvas a faltar al respeto a los dardos, ¿entendido?" (CL: 129); "No puedo. Estoy viendo la tele." (CL: 208); "¡Sólo tienen unas cuantas empanadas de cerdo! ¡Mierda jodida!" (CL: 306); "No me digas gracias, ¡joder! Pero, ¿tú quién te crees?" (CL: 410).

As a matter of fact, Keith only expresses himself coherently when he is repeating somebody else's words ("It would seem that Keats [...] for all his celebrations of the physical, is not a little coy and uh, evasive, even in the safety of his enchanted forest.", LF: 355), or whatever he has read in the tabloids or heard on television ("Mutual body pleasure. The importance of sufficient foreplay. A full but firm figure. Consenting adults", LF: 328). Keith's reply to Guy's question about his opinion on a particular football match, possesses special interest in that it establishes a comic contrast with Keith's spontaneous mode of expression, and is an excellent parody of the sports journalists' jargon (see LF: 91). The narrator explains that Keith does not memorise the gobbledegook he reads or listens to, but rather, "that misery of stringer's clichés *is what he actually sees.*" (LF: 98).

Most of his friends and neighbours share many of the peculiarities of Keith's diction ("Torch onna blink", LF: 248; "She dripping with joolery", LF: 249; "Want I mind your car?", LF: 265), in which Wayne becomes "Whine", and Sue, "Sow" (LF: 256). The weight of the examples of this mode of expression uttered by other characters of marginal importance is secondary in the novel. In consequence, their reproduction in the target text bears a lesser importance than that of Keith's speech, since they appear in isolation, and do not show any vital link with the general background of the novel, other than the depiction of Keith's social environment.

In order to compensate the inevitable losses which will take place when translating Keith's speech into Spanish, the target text could include modifiers whose function

would be to specify the most prominent features of this character's speech ("torpemente", "con rudeza", "de modo vulgar", etc.). This is a poor solution, though, in comparison with the extraordinary richness and colour of the original voice. For instance, it is practically impossible to reproduce graphically the difference between *yeah* and *yes*, since alternatives such as *psi*, *pse*, *psa*, as opposed to *sí*, could not always be used in the same context as "Yeah", since they normally indicate the speaker's lack of conviction or certainty. On one occasion, Keith's social status is defined by a single phoneme. When Analiese Furnish, one of Keith's many lovers, mistakes him for a television personality, the comically named Rick Purist, his answer is a two-fold one, both in what he says and, above all, in *how* he says it: "Thus the opening, tone-setting phoneme of their relationship--his slurred "yeah"--was an outright lie" (LF: 49). Moreno translated this passages as: "Así pues, la frase inaugural, y que marcó el tono, de su relación fue una resonante mentira" (CL:70). The source-text narrator's remark befits perfectly Martin Amis's own conception of the British as a society ruled by class prejudices, in which the pronunciation of a monosyllable can betray one's social origin, whereas the target-text rendition suppresses this implicit piece of information.

Better, albeit less viable, would be to utilise expressions that characterise the jargon of Spanish delinquents. There would not be a risk of alienating the character from his own socio-cultural context, since the translation would only imply the reproduction of the slang used by his peers in a different cultural frame. Thus, "I'll pop in on me mum" (LF: 11) would become "Me pasaré a ver a la vieja", and "She's sick like" (ibid.), "Está pocha/chunga". It is worth considering that the phonic elements that identify this kind of sociolect in English will have to be compensated by features of a lexical nature in Spanish, a language endowed with less versatile phonetics.

An added difficulty that confronts the translator is that Keith's meagre vocabulary is surprisingly polysemic. The "Cheers" that first appears on page 8 does not portend the many occasions in which this expression will subsequently appear in the novel, in an impressive array of different meanings, and the same can be said of "as such" or "innit" (LF: 13...). These expressions, which constitute a high percentage of Keith's vocabulary, are frequently semantically empty: "cheers" is rarely used as a form of bidding good-bye or saying thanks, and, more often than not, the questioning element is missing from "innit", as is the defining element in "as such". But this lack of meaning paradoxically bears great signification. It is extremely difficult to find expressions in Spanish with which to establish a one-to-one relationship, but in many



occasions “as such” can be translated as “tal que...”, and “innit” as “como que”. Moreno, nevertheless, chose not to maintain a systematic approach to the translation of these expressions, and rendered them by means of various strategies (often, compensating in place, or by splitting). As a result, Keith’s speech in *Campos de Londres* lacks the mannerisms that define it in the source text.

Towards the end of the novel, Guy, Nicola and even the narrator start to show symptoms of having been infected by Keith’s individual way of speaking. Guy greets him, “Cheers, Keith” (LF: 360), Nicola replies to one of his commands, “No way. Innit” (LF: 461), and Young describes: “Settling on the pillows like, Keith ran a hand down her throat as such, and reached for the brandy bottle innit.” (LF: 431). These utterances clearly stand out in the characters’ respective idiolects, the contrast with their social status is duly established, and Keith’s influence on them is made evident. Moreno’s respective renditions do not achieve these goals, since the origin of the expressions was not sufficiently documented throughout the novel as characteristic of Keith’s idiolect: “Salud, Keith” (CL: 438); “No, ni lo pienses. Ni hablar. Nanai.” (CL: 560); “Aposentándose en las almohadas, Keith pasó una mano por debajo de la garganta de Nicola, así sin más, al ir a coger la botella de coñac.” (CL: 523).

To sum up, to alter the idiosyncrasy of Keith’s speech would imply his transformation into a different character, since his ignorance and the meanness of his spirit are portrayed in *London Fields* through his verbal incoherence and the poverty of his language in a more precise and significant manner than they are through the narrator’s remarks on such matters.

The voice of the rest of the characters that appear in *London Fields* is not differentiated from a social point of view. Different markers are used in the case of other characters, which are dealt with in the other sections of this chapter, but these do not present a social hue.

## 2.2. *Tiempo de silencio*

### 2.2.1. The Upper Class

**Matías** is the most prominent example of this group in *Tiempo de silencio*. He uses language in a pedantic manner, similar to Pedro’s, overtly playing with words by

virtue of his educated status and erudition. Unlike Pedro, he has no apparent occupation: he is one of the idle rich. His speech is, therefore, more purely social than Pedro's (see below), in that it is representative of his background and surroundings.

Matías' brattish displays of erudition and his affected middle-class mode of expression do not pose translatability problems. He makes use of foreign locutions ("Jubilatio in carne feminae", Ts: 87 – TS: 71; "¡Postume, Postume labuntur anni!", Ts: 107 – TS: 87; "Dieu et mon Droit", Ts:110 – TS: 90), resorts to an imitation of the mode of expression of classical literature and medieval and romantic stories (see his discourses and addresses in the brothel), using an abundance of mythological allusions (Edipo and Electra, Ts: 109 and 111) and biblical references ("¡Vírgenes de Jerusalem...!", Ts: 103; "Yo soy el que soy", Ts: 110)<sup>64</sup>. All these discourse elements perform a similar function in English, and they are likely to be interpreted from the same perspective by source- and target-text readers.

### 2.2.2. The middle classes

From a sociological point of view, **Pedro** has been described as a "marginal" character, "puesto que es extraño a todos los ambientes en que se ve implicado" (Riezu, 1980: 84). His speech is, indeed, more coloured by his intellectual capacity than by his social status itself. There are two modes of linguistic characterisation of Pedro in *Tiempo de silencio*, the first being his interior monologues, and the second, his conversations with other characters.

Pedro's interior monologues are often a diluted version of the narrative technique known as *stream of consciousness*. This technique was greatly favoured by the modernists, and most famously cultivated by James Joyce, whose *Ulysses* was an inspiration for Martín-Santos' when writing *Tiempo de silencio*. This technique consists of the reproduction of somebody's thoughts as they occur, namely, without the formal restrictions that grammar and other conventions (for instance, punctuation) impose on a written text. S. Burunat specifies that "El monólogo interior empleado por Martín-Santos se denomina monólogo dialéctico porque combina el monólogo interior en sí con la narración exterior" (1980: 179). In this literary technique, she sees the

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<sup>64</sup> Even though Leeson translated the first exclamation by means of the standard biblical phrase in English ("Daughters of Jerusalem...", TS: 84), he transformed the second reference into the non-biblical: "I am what I am" (TS: 90).

logical form of expression for presenting the chaotic and absurd world of *Tiempo de silencio* (see *ibid.*: 46). According to her, “Martín-Santos muestra el egoísmo de Pedro a través de sus monólogos interiores y termina estableciendo su superioridad en cuanto al personaje, a quien desea destruir por lo que representa” (*ibid.*: 181).

J. Labanyi elaborates on these issues in a perceptive study of the use of the interior monologue and free indirect style in *Tiempo de silencio*. She claims that they are instruments that help Martín-Santos’ achieve his satirical intention: “la sátira más lograda en la novela se consigue al confundir la perspectiva crítica del narrador con la del personaje, a través del estilo indirecto libre” (1985: 144). Martín-Santos uses free association, repetitions, omissions, truncated structures, anacolutha, all of them features characteristic of the intimacy of the act of thinking. However, he observes some order and some precepts, and never favours the spontaneous quality of his characters’ train of thought (and this is especially true in the case of Pedro) over the conventional rules of the literary style. As Labanyi puts it, “en *Tiempo de silencio*, el uso del monólogo interior pocas veces es natural” (*ibid.*: 129). Because of its intimacy, this kind of speech reveals the innermost traits of the personality of the character. Thus, Pedro appears as a middle-class young man, but above all, as a man of science.

Pedro’s discourse is overly educated. As Jacques Beyrie says (1980: 2), “Pedro [...] ne se contente pas de parler en médecin: il n’hésite pas à recourir au vocabulaire des branches les plus diverses du savoir: biologie, chimie, mais aussi zoologie, histoire, ethnologie, sociologie, symbolique, etc.”. He very frequently borders on the pedantic, as the author himself pointed out (see *ibid.*). He is a man who lives through his words. Always trying to rationalise his surroundings, always interpreting things from the perspective of his science or of his academic learning, he fails to act. On the rare occasions when he does (as in his sexual intercourse with Dorita, or the performance of Florita’s abortion), he alienates himself (“lejos de sí mismo y lejos de ella, desde algún resquicio lúcido del espíritu, contempla lejanos, abandonados, solos o automáticos, no poseídos por él, sino por algún demonio, los dos cuerpos”, Ts: 117), or acts mechanically, according to the knowledge embedded in his brain (“Don Pedro, se esforzaba con gestos deliberadamente hábiles... continuaba automáticamente el raspado...”, Ts: 135). This inaction, Pedro’s social paralysis, finds an echo in the name of the character (see p. 140).

In Leeson's translation, Pedro's discourse is systematically simplified. His embroiled interior monologues are made more coherent and cohesive, and the often unnecessary scientism in his speech is restrained in the target text. It would have to be presumed that the translator did this in order to improve on the source text, which certainly gains in comprehensibility on a surface level. However, the target readership is denied the insight into Pedro's tormented personality that Martín-Santos portrayed it in the source text through the formal characteristics of his discourse.

Idelect and sociolect are as intimately linked in Pedro's voice as they are in Keith Talent's (see pp. 97-101). The reproduction of Pedro's speech presents the difficulties entailed by the continuous presence of technicisms in Pedro's speech and its bookishness, which very often borders on the pedantic, as well as the intertextuality derived from the influence of foreign currents of thought (see p. 192). The brief conversations that Pedro has with other characters show the different power relationships between him and the others. As a result, a distortion of this character's sociolect in the target text would result in a disfiguration of his presentation to the readers, since the alienation he experiences is mirrored in his speech. As suggested above, his intellectual calibre is what gives Pedro his place in society, and what ultimately makes him estranged from it.

One step below in the social ladder, the **landlady** of the *pensión* exposes her vulgarity and the coarseness of her spirit through her pretentious and affected mode of speech. But, leaving aside traits that fall purely within the category of idelect, there are features in her discourse that betray her social background. As E. Díaz-Varcárcel (1982: 41) stated, "Viuda de militar, su idiolecto suena castrense, lo que significa la concepción del mundo como un campo de batalla".

In her interior monologues (Ts: 20-29; 96-99), which, however loosely, conform to the rules of "stream of consciousness" (freely associated thoughts, intimate tone) better than Pedro's, her style oscillates between the pompous and the popular, revealing a sense of self-importance that perfectly befits her condition of a military man's widow with claims to a place in good society. Her aspirations to social-climbing, although never fulfilled, pervade her speech in the form of far-fetched linguistic constructions: "su marcialidad esquiva" (Ts: 20); "embargados como estaban por la pena del momento y por el fallecimiento del excelente compañero" (Ts: 24); "para que esta obra maestra de todos nuestros pecados no se nos malogre, sino que, totalmente abierto el capullo encantador que ahora representa, logre obtener el riquísimo fruto que sin

dudarlo merece" (Ts: 29). It would seem that Leeson tried to make sense of this inanity when he translated these passages, respectively, by means of a more logical collocation ("fine military bearing", TS: 14), reduction ("overcome as they were by the sadness of the occasion", TS: 18), and simplification combined with elucidation ("that no harm shall come to this masterpiece produced by our sins, but pray that when this flower bud opens it may fulfil its promise in the rich fruit that it shall produce", TS: 22).

These elaborate structures contrast with speech elements that clearly reveal her lack of education and refinement, such as unintentionally ridiculous expressions (see pp. 165-66) and derivations: "la masita" and "figulinas" (Ts: 20). Leeson translated these two terms as "pay" and "ornaments" (TS: 15), which lack the ludicrousness of their source-text counterparts. Something similar happens with anomalous syntactical structures, such as: "Entonces fue cuando me dio por el arrancamiento" (Ts: 25) and "yo estaba víctima del rum negrita" (Ts: 26), which Leeson turned into more regular constructions: "That was when I started to let myself go" (TS: 19) and "I was under the influence of Negrita Rum" (TS: 20).

The author also uses the narrative technique known as "free indirect speech" for the characterisation of the old woman (see, for example, Ts: 118-19). Through this technique, the narrator expresses the thoughts and feelings of the characters in the way that the characters themselves would express them. Her evil personality is also thus brought to light, as her dominant temper is disclosed in the manner in which she treats the servant (see Ts: 143) and her own daughter ("¡Cállate, Dora!", Ts: 269). However, she cunningly disguises her true nature when she addresses Pedro. She does so in a patronising fashion ("Usted es tan niño", Ts: 46; "¿Qué horitas son esas?", Ts: 119) that reveals unmistakably her mischievous intentions of "catching" him for her granddaughter. The published translation does not emphasise such distinctions: the difference in register between "Be quiet, Dora!" (TS: 224), on the one hand, and "You're such a boy" (TS: 36) or "What an hour to come home!" (TS: 97), on the other, is not as noticeable or revealing as the difference established in the source text. Along the same lines, she adopts a somewhat servile attitude when talking to Matías, who belongs to a social sphere well above her own ("¡Pase! ¡Pase! ¿Usted gusta?", Ts: 268), which is not manifest in Leeson's rendition ("Come in! Come in! Can I offer you anything?", TS: 223).



Thus, what is gained in normality and comprehensibility in Leeson's translation, is lost in the characterisation of the landlady through her discourse. However, this loss is not unavoidable, provided that the translator can balance the pretentiousness of her speech with her scattered vulgarisms<sup>65</sup>, so that the characterisation is consistent with the traits of the source text.

### 2.2.3. The lower class

The most prominent member of this social group in *Tiempo de silencio* is **Amador**. His speech is simple and picturesque, often resorting to popular expressions. His way of speaking is determined by his working environment (a scientific institution) and his social status, and oscillates consequently between the (purportedly) formal and the colloquial. In spite of his rude mode of expression, he is aware of the requirements that his job and his social status impose on him. He addresses Pedro in a deferential tone, always using the formal second person pronoun ("usted"), and often the title "Don". On the other hand, he turns to more common forms of speech when talking to the *chabolas*' dwellers, and is even abrupt in his dealings with el Muecas (Ts: 60-1).

This amusing imbalance was not preserved in Leeson's translation, since the differentiation between the registers that Amador uses is inconspicuous. For example, the colloquialism of: "y servidor" (Ts: 9), "Tienen hasta así la chabola de ellas" (Ts: 13), or "Son las fetén" (Ts: 14), does not resonate in "and me" (TS: 5), "The hut's full of them" (TS: 9), or "they are the right ones" (TS: 10). This, however, cannot be used as an argument for untranslatability, because it does not rule out the possibility of reflecting the nuances of Amador's speech in an alternative target text in English.

### 2.2.4. The social outcast

**Cartucho**'s main vehicle for expression in the novel is the interior monologue, once again, closer to true stream of consciousness than Pedro's deliberations. He uses a language fraught with slang terms ("amolar", "pinché", "já", "pañí de muelle", "pelés", "diquelar", "chamullando"..., Ts: 54-5) blasphemy and swear words ("Me cago en el corazón de su madre, la muy zorra", Ts: 54; "Me cago en la tumba de su

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<sup>65</sup> A translation problem in this respect is highlighted by Leeson's misunderstanding of "tronado" (colloquial for "mad"), which led him to translate the passage: "Estuvo siempre un poco tronado yo creo y no había manera de tenerle sujeto" (Ts: 21), incoherently, as: "I think he was always a bit short of money, and there was no way of keeping him under control" (TS: 16).

padre”, Ts: 55 and 128). He belongs to the underworld of social deprivation and poverty. His interior monologues and the brief conversations he holds with other characters reveal his aggression, his brutality and his grossness. In them, simple sentences containing numerous vulgarisms and grammatical errors are juxtaposed in a rude, unlearned manner (“estao”, “cuidao”..., Ts: 54; “me venía de lao”, “Yo la seguí dando cuerda”, Ts: 56).

His would be an “antilanguage”, to follow Halliday’s terminology (1978), which is defined by Fowler (1981: 142) as the language of the “sub-cultures which exist in an antagonistic relationship with the norm society.” The speech of this character is close to that of Keith Talent’s in its colourful vulgarity. Although his participation in *Tiempo de silencio* is not as substantial as Keith’s in *London Fields*, the remarks on the translation of the latter’s discourse apply also in Cartucho’s case (see p. 101).

Leeson appears to have followed a strategy similar to that suggested by Newmark with regard to this type of jargon (see p. 98). He bowdlerised Cartucho’s discourse and made it conform to grammatical rules, but he also interspersed vulgar terms (“sly bitch [...] sly bastard [...] silly cow”, TS: 43) and argot (albeit slightly odd: “Looking him straight in the kisser” [TS: 44] for “Mirándole a la jeta” [Ts: 55]), with the occasional concession to anomalous morphology (“I says [...], says I”, TS: 45).

As far as the rest of the characters in the novel are concerned, the social differences that their respective speech illustrates can be easily reproduced in translation, too: the prostitutes reveal their lack of refinement and their ignorance; the philosopher, his vacuous erudition; the members of the high society, their pretentious idleness; Dorita, her simplicity; Similiano, his modest social background and his lack of education; and the questioning policeman and the director of the Institute, their prepotency.

It seems that the most important considerations to bear in mind when translating the several social varieties that appear in *Tiempo de silencio* are: the differentiation they establish between the characters and the power-relations that are expressed in conversation. The speech of each one of the characters and that of the narrator is perfectly differentiated in the source text. If the differences in the modes of expression of the characters are diluted in translation (which is the case with Leeson’s translation), the “voices” of the original are not easily recognisable from the target text, as a result. This is a type of deficiency which can be avoided. What is required is careful

consideration of the defining features of the source text in themselves, previous to their conversion into target text elements. Thus, the importance of the role of the translator as a reader is highlighted.

### 3. *The speech of foreigners*

#### 3.1. *London Fields*

In the first chapter, Samson Young ridicules the pronunciation of foreign tourists who visit London, in order to show Keith that he is not one of them and thus avoid being a victim to Keith's swindle: "I don't say twenty quids and Trafajiar Square and *Barnet*." (LF: 11). Given that the references are bound to become obscured in translation<sup>66</sup>, the target text should be transformed so that, at least, the message that Young is trying to convey appears clear. A rendition of the original along the lines of "Me conozco el slang y sé pronunciar los nombres de los sitios" would appear to be more illuminating for the target text reader than Moreno's translation: "No le he dicho veinte libritas y Trafaljiar Square and *Barnet*."<sup>67</sup> (CL: 23).

As well as these parodic allusions to foreigners' speech, more challenging occurrences (from the point of view of translation) also appear in *London Fields*. This is the case of a character who does have a voice in the novel, which will be analysed below.

##### 3.1.1. Incarnacion

Incarnacion is the cleaning lady who keeps Mark Asprey's apartment tidy. She becomes acquainted with Samson Young while he is living in the apartment. Her Spanish origin is an illustration of London's multiculturalism, as well as of the roles generally assumed in that multicultural society by the South European work force. It is also an excuse to introduce a new linguistic variety or peculiarity in *London Fields*. Her linguistic characterisation does not present great importance in the general frame of

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<sup>66</sup>Although there are colloquial denominations for "money" in Spanish, they do not lend themselves to the type of mistake on which the author is playing here (the incorrect pluralisation of "quid"). At the same time, signalling the mispronunciation of words by graphic means (such as italics) might not be obvious enough for the readers who do not know the language well enough to perceive the error.

<sup>67</sup>See above. Also, the choice of verbal tense is infelicitous here, since it implies that Young has asked to be taken to Trafalgar Square and *Barnet*, which is not the case.

*London Fields* and should be regarded as yet another picturesque touch, which may have a humorous impact on the text at some points.

Incarnacion could automatically become *Encarnación* in the target text<sup>68</sup> (Moreno chose, indeed, to transcribe the name according to its Spanish spelling). It is, however, not so easy to reflect in Spanish (her mother tongue) her less-than-perfect English: “It suit you. You sleepy, you want to go to bed. You go to bed. Don’t ask. You want to watch the TV. Okay!” (LF: 159). It has to be presumed that Incarnacion expresses herself in Spanish more correctly than she does in English. It would be therefore incongruous to translate literally her lines in *London Fields* (which are not many). However, if these appear in Spanish without any sort of distinctive feature (as they do in Moreno’s translation), the source-text feature would find no continuation in the target text.

A possible solution to this dilemma is to insert in the target text explanatory notes, such as “dijo en su inglés titubeante”, or even, “dijo en su inglés macarrónico”. But these addenda may prove to be cumbersome, not to mention intrusive. The intrusion would be, in this case, that of the translator-narrator, which is absent from the source text. A different way to solve this kind of problem would be to resort to a linguistic variety in Spanish for the target text. This variety could be regional, or social. Regional varieties have the advantage of allowing a consistent, easily identifiable characterisation, but they usually respond to some sort of prejudice and could be considered derogatory or offensive to the linguistic community that uses that variety. In consequence, it can be seen as preferable to use graphic representations of deviations from the phonological norm in the target text (past participle endings in “-ao”/“-á”, rather than, respectively, in “-ado” or “-ada”, for example), and to include vulgarisms and colloquialisms to shape this character’s speech.

In the specific case that we are contemplating here, we find a certain advantageous detail. In *London Fields* Incarnacion’s native Granada is mentioned; thus, it would seem appropriate to adapt her mode of expression in the target text to the linguistic variety of that Spanish area. The most obvious inconvenience, however negligible, is that what is no more than a **linguistic anomaly** in the source text becomes a **dialectal variety** in the target text. It is also possible in this case to resort to cultural transplantation as a translation procedure. Hervey *et al.* (1995: 23) state this is an

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<sup>68</sup> The bullfighter “Manolito” (LF: 412) could likewise become *Manolete*, so as to avoid a comical effect that had not been intended, but Moreno chose not to effect the change in this case.



option “on certain points of detail - as long as they do not have knock-on effects that make the TT [target text] incongruous”. Incarnacion could be given a different nationality and a different name in the target text. Thus, features of her “new” native language could be included in the Spanish version of the novel and the translator would become a re-creator of the original.

### **3.2. *Tiempo de silencio***

#### **3.2.1. The German Painter**

The speech of the German painter, his less-than-perfect Castilian (“Esto no está nada pagado”, Ts: 84; “La mía es otro”, Ts: 86; “Asco para mí. Esto no está artístico... No ser expresionista.”, Ts: 87; “¿Qué ser magma?”, Ts: 90; etc.) constitutes an example of the comic possibilities of the exploitation of linguistic peculiarities. He unwittingly distorts the language (“Bono”, Ts: 83... ; “corpo”, Ts: 84... ; “Per favor”, Ts: 86... ; etc.), and Pedro and Matías mimic his mistakes in mockery and even scorn.

The issue of the translation of the speech of the German writer into English is not as problematic as the translation of Incarnacion’s into Spanish, since the former’s would not be translated into his own native tongue. As Leeson did (see p. 169), grammatical and phonological adjustments can be introduced into the target text, so that the anomalies perceived in the source text are also apparent in translation.

There are certain instances of linguistic variation which appear in *London Fields* and do not have an equivalent in *Tiempo de silencio*. Those will be dealt with below.

### **4. *Baby talk***

Kim Talent and Marmaduke Clinch respectively stand in *London Fields* for a polarisation of the positive and negative qualities of infants. Martin Amis mentioned that a child is simultaneously “heaven and hell” (*Scotland on Sunday*, 24 September 1989) for its parents. In the case of the babies that appear in *London Fields*, Kim is an angel and Marmaduke a devil with no redeeming features.



Kim is the only *London Fields* character who is portrayed in an entirely positive manner. She embodies abused innocence. She is the victim of alien circumstances over which she does not have any control. The final apostrophe in the novel is addressed to her: the words that, for the first time in *London Fields*, hint at a message of hope. And this is so because Kim Talent, survivor of the World Crisis and the drama of her family background, represents the future in *London Fields*.

However, Kim Talent, in her innocence, seems to be more aware of the events that, in their domestic or international variants, surround her. At least, that is what her opportune contributions to some of her parents' dialogues indicate. Transcriptions of these contributions can be found below, accompanied by Moreno's renditions of the passages, in order to illustrate the effect that translation can have not only in specific passages, but also and more importantly, in relation to the novel as a whole.

- a.                    'War,' said the baby.  
                       Kath said, 'It's the news.'  
                       'Oh that,' he said with relief.  
                       'The verification,' said Kath.  
                       'Lie,' said the baby.  
                       Keith said, 'Nothing in it. What reason?'  
                       'I don't know. You look at the...'  
                       'Oil,' said the baby.  
                       Kath said, 'A flare-up. A flashpoint somewhere.'  
                       'Eh?'  
                       'Wall,' said the baby.  
                       (LF: 105)

- Guerra -dijo la pequeña.
  - Es lo que dicen las noticias -contestó.
  - Ah, es eso -exclamó Keith con alivio.
  - La comprobación -explicó Kath.
  - Entira -dijo la pequeña. Keith medió:
  - No pasa nada. ¿Por qué *motivo*?
  - No sé. Si miras el...
  - Gas -dijo la pequeña.
  - Una llamarada. Un incendio en alguna parte -continuó Kath.
  - ¿Eh?
  - Pared -dijo la pequeña.
- (CL: 134)

The polysyllabism characteristic of the Spanish language poses a considerable obstacle for a convincing literal translation of the terms used in the source text. It is not very plausible for a young baby to utter words such as "guerra", "entira", or "pared"

(words that, in addition, have a phonetic structure of difficult imitation for someone who is learning to talk). To make things worse, the target text borders the surreal, due to a misinterpretation of the original. *Oil* almost certainly refers to petroleum (“petróleo”), one of the commonest triggers of international conflicts. Along the same lines, the *Wall* in the source text is undoubtedly the Berlin Wall (“Muro de Berlín”). Therefore, the translation of those terms as *Gas* and *Pared*, respectively, hinders the understanding of the text in Spanish.

- b.                    ‘Idea,’ said the baby.  
                          ‘Lager,’ said Keith.  
                          ‘Here,’ said Kath.  
                          ‘Adore,’ said the baby.  
                          ‘What’s that?’ said Keith, meaning the TV.  
                          ‘Ordure,’ said the baby.  
                          ‘News. Nothing on the Crisis,’ said Kath.  
                          ‘I’ll give *you* a crisis in a minute,’ said Keith.  
                          ‘Adieu,’ said the baby.  
                          ‘Lager,’ said Keith.  
                          ‘Adieu, adore, ordure, idea.’  
                          (LF: 256)

- Idea -dijo la niña.
- Lager -dijo Keith.
- Aquí -dijo Kath.
- Adoro -dijo la niña.
- ¿Qué es eso? -dijo Keith, refiriéndose a la televisión.
- Basura -dijo la niña.
- Noticias. Nada sobre la Crisis.
- Ya *te* daré yo una buena crisis dentro de un minuto -dijo Keith.
- Adiós -dijo la niña.
- Lager -dijo Keith.
- Adiós, adoro, basura, idea.
- (CL: 315)

Here once more some serious translatability problems are found. What can be read in the source text as inarticulate sounds, become perfectly formed words in the published translation. These words are difficult enough to identify with a baby’s babble. Also, the inclusion in the target text of terms not very well-known in the target culture (*Lager*), as well as a *sui generis* translation of certain phrases (“Aquí”, instead of “Toma”, and “Ya te daré yo una buena crisis dentro de un minuto”, instead of “Ya te voy a dar yo a ti crisis”) impinges on the comprehensibility of the passage.

Although the most apparent mistranslations that have been mentioned above can be easily avoided in an alternative target text, the gap between the phonetic patterns of English and Spanish will pose grave problems in any case. Since the authorial

intentionality in the two excerpts quoted above seems oriented towards textual semantics, that is, to emphasise the *meanings* of the words themselves so that they can be interpreted in a wider context, the most appropriate solution would be reproducing them in the target language. They can be modified in a way that would make them resemble predictable baby talk in the target text. As the usage of polysyllabic words seems unavoidable, the various syllables could appear separated by dashes (“mu-ro”, “pe-t(r)ó-le-o”, “i-de-a”, etc.), in order to achieve a graphical imitation of the characteristically faltering speech of a baby.

Marmaduke plays Mr Hyde to Kim’s Dr Jekyll. Despite Samson Young’s comment, “I censor him. I bowdlerize him too. There’s some stuff you just can’t put in books” (LF: 158), Marmaduke Clinch is portrayed in *London Fields* as something out of a nightmare, with no palliatives. He is a hideous baby and yet, unconditionally adored by his parents: “He [Guy] loved Marmaduke despite the clear sense, constantly refreshed, that Marmaduke had no lovable qualities. Marmaduke gave no pleasure to anyone except when he was asleep. When he was asleep, you could gaze down at him and thank the Lord that he wasn’t awake” (LF: 214). This diminutive satyr bites, hits, tortures, abuses, destroys, and epitomises the most negative aspects of early childhood. Of the newly born we learn on page 28 of *London Fields*, “Oh, the little boy was perfect in every way. And he was a monster”. In his primitive, although malicious, lingo, “milk” becomes *milt*, (LF: 83 and 219); “toast” becomes *toce* (LF: 83); and a polite “please” in *police* (LF: 220).

A typical contribution of Marmaduke’s towards the comical effect in *London Fields* is included below. His father, Guy, is showing him a book, and asks him the names of the objects and animal pictured in its illustrations:

- c.                    ‘Darling? Come and sit on my lap.’  
                          ‘...Go way.’  
                          ‘Come on. And read a book. Come and sit on Daddy’s lap.  
                          There’s a good boy.’  
                          ‘Zap.’  
                          ‘Lap. Very good! *Good* boy. Look. Food. You like food.  
                          What’s that?’  
                          ‘Bam.’  
                          ‘Bam? ...Spam. Sssspam. Very good. What’s that?’  
                          ‘Agh.’  
                          ‘Egg, yes. Egg. What’s that?... What’s that?... We’re in the  
                          garden now. What’s that? What’s that, darling?’  
                          ‘Dick.’  
                          ‘Stick. Very good. Ssstick. Now here’s a flower. Say  
                          “flower”... Those are the petals. And this bit down here is--

'Dork.'  
 'Very *good*, darling. Excellent. Now what do you call this?  
 Where the tree used to be. Like in our garden. Where  
 they've chopped it down.'  
 'Dump.'  
 'Marmaduke, you're a genius. What's that?... A tree.  
 What's that?... Grass. Don't do that, darling. *Ow*. Wait.  
 look! Animals. Animals. What's that?'  
 'Jeep.'  
 'Yes, sheep. Very good. What's that?'  
 'Zion.'  
 'Lion. Lllion. Lllion. Very good. And what's this squidgy  
 thing here?'  
 'Nail.'  
 'Snail. Excellent! Aha. here's your favourite. Here's the  
 best animal of them all. No wait, darling. Hey! One more.  
 You like this one. What is it? What is it?'  
 '...Gunk!'  
 'Yes! And what does it do? What does it do no other animal  
 can? What does it do?'  
 '...Dink!'

(LF: 223-224)

- Tesoro... ven a sentarte en mis rodillas.  
 - ...Vete.  
 - Venga. Y te leo un libro. Ven a sentarte en las rodillas de  
 papá. Mi niño es muy bueno.  
 - Odila.  
 - Rodillas. ¡Muy bien! Un niño muy bueno. Mira. Comida.  
 A ti te gusta comer. ¿Qué es esto?  
 - Aela.  
 - ¿Aela? Mortadela. Mor-ta-de-la. Muy bien. ¿Y esto?  
 - Evo.  
 - Huevo, sí. Huevo. ¿Y esto qué es?... ¿Qué es esto?...  
 Ahora estamos en el jardín. ¿Qué es esto? ¿Qué es esto,  
 tesoro?  
 - Alo.  
 - Palo. Muy bien. Pa-lo. Y ahora, mira qué flor. Di "flor"...  
 Estos son los pétalos. Y esta cosita es...  
 - Ayo.  
 - Muy *bien*, tesoro. Fantástico. Y ahora, ¿cómo llamarías tú  
 a esto? Donde estaba el árbol. Como en nuestro jardín.  
 Donde lo han cortado.  
 - Etedero.  
 - Marmaduke, eres un genio. ¿Qué es esto...? Un árbol.  
 ¿Qué es esto...? Hierba. No hagas eso, tesoro. ¡Ay! Espera,  
 ¡mira! Animales. Animales. ¿Qué es esto?  
 - Bodego.  
 - Sí, borrego. Muy bien. ¿Qué es esto?  
 - Dabo.  
 - Rabo. Rrabo. Rrrabo. Muy bien. ¿Y qué es este bichito de  
 aquí?  
 - Acol.

- Caracol. ¡Fantástico! Ajá. Aquí está tu favorito. Aquí está el mejor animal de todos. No, espera, tesoro. ¡Eh! El último. Este te gusta mucho. ¿Qué es? ¿Qué es?  
 - Eeante.  
 - ¡Sí! ¿Y qué tiene? ¿Qué tiene este animal que no tienen los demás animales? ¿Qué es lo que tiene?  
 - Ompa.  
 (CL: 277-278)

This passage is tinged in the target text with the charm of a scene in which a father tries to teach his son how to speak. The source text nevertheless reveals new aspects in Marmaduke's mischievous nature. His favourite animal is the skunk, because it stinks, and not the elephant, trunk or no trunk. The child's lexicon is made of equivocal terms, which the benevolent father interprets in their most innocent (and least obvious) sense. An analysis of these terms shows their true malevolent meaning is shown below:

- *Zap* (target text: *Odila*) is a slang term, meaning "to attack, kill, or destroy".
- *Bam* (target text: *Aela*) is an onomatopoeic term for a blow or a slamming sound.
- *Agh* (target text: *Evo*) indicates disgust.
- *Dick* (target text: *Alo*) is slang for "penis".
- *Dork* (target text: *Ayo*) is a slang term which designates a harmless fool.
- *Dump* (target text: *Etedero*) means "disreputable or filthy place", as well as "vertedero" (the place where rubbish is dumped).
- A *Jeep* (target text: *Bodego*) is a vehicle very often used in military campaigns.
- *Zion* (target text: *Dabo*) is the name of one of the hills upon which Jerusalem was built. This name is also currently used to refer to the modern Jewish nation and its religious system, by virtue of which the term has been long associated with international conflicts.
- *Nail* (target text: *Acol*) has, among others, the meaning "clavo", a term that presents connotations of violence and pain. It is also used in junkies' slang to denominate a hypodermic needle<sup>69</sup>.
- *Gunk* (target text: *Eeante*) is an informal name for slimy, oily, or filthy matter.
- *Dink* (target text: *Ompa*) is the name of Marmaduke's mother's lover. Guy is, of course, unaware of their affair.

<sup>69</sup> According to Eric Partridge in *A Concise Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English* (London: Routledge, 1989), this usage enters the English language in 1986, and therefore it is possible that Martin Amis had it in mind when writing this episode.



It seems obvious that, although phonetic and orthographic distortion in the target text makes these terms believable as coming from a very young child, the translator failed in reproducing the function, even the meaning, that they have in the source text: he seems either to have chosen to ignore the hidden significance of this passage or to have overlooked it. The unwitting irony in Guy's phrase, "Marmaduke, you're a genius", when his son transforms the word "stump" into *Dump*, is completely absent from the target text. Equally absent are the hilarious overtones of this dialogue in English, since the double-meanings are utterly erased from the Spanish version.

In this instance, a certain poetic licence seems justified: a departure from what is actually expressed in the source text, in favour of the preservation of the effect intended by the author, i.e. the comedy derived from the equivoque. If this were so, Marmaduke would appear in the target text surrounded by the evil halo which permanently characterises him in the source text. On one occasion at least, the original favours an almost parallel translation into Spanish: the pair "stick"-*Dick* offers a fortunate phonetic similitude with "palo"- "falo". Although the latter term is more "scientific" than "dick" (clearly taboo in English), this difference would be acceptable, since the semantic content is preserved, and this content is essential in the light of Marmaduke's Oedipus complex that materialises in a murderous hatred towards Guy. In the same way, "stalk"-*Dork* could be translated as "capullo", a word also used in Spanish to refer to a part of the flower, as well as to the prepuce, and, as a derogatory term, whose meaning is roughly coincidental with that of "dork".

If a deformed word's meaning is to be maintained in the target text, because of its denotative or connotative meaning, the actual word it derives from can be translated into one that is phonetically similar, even though it does not bear any semantic resemblance with the term in the source text. For instance, *Zion* "derives" from *lion* in the source text; in Spanish, however, it would be more appropriate to pair off "Sión" and "sillón". Marmaduke's other lines in this conversation would seem to require further elaboration before they are transposed to the target text. As we have stated above, the words which are used here have not so much importance in themselves as in that they serve a global purpose. Thus, if Guy said in the Spanish version of this passage, "Siéntate aquí conmigo", Marmaduke could answer, "(E)nemigo"; if, instead of *mortadela*, Guy showed his son a picture of a paté can, he could have transformed the term into "Maté", or even, "Pateé"; and so on.

To conclude, it is worth noting again that towards the end of the novel, Marmaduke's speech becomes more articulate and does not convey any subliminal meaning: "A man." (LF: 450); "Mummy? Don't love Daddy. [...] Good." (LF: 451). In these cases, the translatability problems are non-existent. However, the instances in which the two babies' babble provides useful insights into the background of the story or some of its sub-plots could be suitably transformed into sequences of terms that have a similar relevance in the target text.

## 5. *Idiosyncratic speech*

### 5.1. Janit Slotnick

Missy Harter's secretary, has some sort of speech impediment (or rather, affectation), that makes her pronounce weak vocalic sounds as /I/: "Disappointmin, sir. [...] So is the denouemint. [...] What happins?" (LF: 160). Her very own name would appear to be a consequence of her diction. This peculiarity prompts Samson Young to start the conversation transcribed below:

'Janit? Say spearmint.'  
'Spearmint.'  
'Now say peppermint.'  
'Peppermint.'  
'Thank you, Janit.'  
'Sir.'

(LF: 231)

The translation of this dialogue appears in the Anagrama edition as follows:

- ¿Janit? Di madreperla.  
- Madreperla.  
- Ahora di madreperla.  
- Madreperla.  
- Gracias, Janit.  
- A su disposición.

(CL: 286)

This sequence lacks any meaning in the target text, because there has not been any previous linguistic characterisation of Janit. In her previous lines in the target text there are no hints at the existence of any sort of anomaly in her mode of expression.

The commonest speech defects in Spanish are probably “ceceo” (conversion of /s/ sounds into /θ/ sounds) and “seseo” (conversion of /θ/ sounds into /s/ sounds). Janit could be made speak with a lisp in the target text. In that case, Samson Young would ask her to pronounce words such as “cereza”, or “cenicero”. If, on the contrary, she was to be characterised by her hissing of certain consonants, the words requested would be of the “sonrisa”, or “simposio” type.

This solution, however, leaves unsolved the question of how to connect the name of the character and her peculiar diction. There is always the possibility of re-naming Janit in the target text, preferably giving the character an English name; if we opt for this alternative, it would be more opportune to chose “seseo” in order to characterise her, since the sound /θ/ is graphically represented as *th* in English, and, consequently, a Spanish reader who is unfamiliar with this language could not establish the correct link between graphemes and pronunciation. Yet the most important issue at stake in this instance is the comic effect. Giving Janit a lisp is enough, it would appear, to preserve this effect in the target text.

## 6. Summary

In conclusion, what has been implied throughout this chapter should now be made explicit: that, accepting that losses will occur, the treatment of the different linguistic varieties in the target text would have to be carried out according to their importance, i.e. to the function which they have in the novel.

It is also worth mentioning here that the British, on the whole, are more sensitive as to the social implications of accents and even voices than Spaniards (see, for instance, Charles Jennings’ *People Like Us*, 1997). Hence the greater emphasis on this feature in *London Fields*, by comparison with *Tiempo de silencio*. The function of linguistic varieties does not differ greatly in either novel: in both texts they serve to identify the characters socially and intellectually or morally. However, Martin Amis took this element of his prose further than did Martín-Santos. As a consequence, it would require more elaboration in the conversion of *London Fields* into a target text than it would in the translation of *Tiempo de silencio*.

Through Keith Talent’s idiolect, Martin Amis conveys a criticism of certain aspects of English society, which are painfully patent among the lowest strata of this society, as

portrayed in the novel: ignorance, bigotry, alienation, the excessive and highly pernicious influence of the media, moral poverty. Other linguistic varieties that appear in *London Fields* respond to more restricted, less important goals and, therefore, the translation losses would not be so prominent in such instances, should they occur.

In the case of *Tiempo de silencio*, the members of the various social strata portrayed reveal their condition through their discourse. The preservation of the differences in tone, vocabulary and presentation in the target text does not seem to entail too much painful work for the translator. Losses will occur, but they can certainly be minimised: it is not the translatability of the text that is at stake in these cases.

In both novels, the social or national status of the characters can be easily inferred from the text, independently of their discourse. So, what can be lost in translation? As has been seen, in certain instances, it can be the comic effect; in others, the mode of interaction between characters; in others, a deviation from the norm. These translation losses could be compensated to a certain extent by using one strategy or another. However, the estrangement of voice and culture, the most meaningful loss of them all, cannot be avoided without defeating the purpose of translation.

What is lost in the translation of linguistic varieties is not a form of identifying the characters, provided that the different varieties are reproduced in the target text. The loss is not textual, but contextual: what becomes missing is the cultural information that the readers of each of the two source texts are able to incorporate in their approach to the novels. This information belongs beyond the text. It encompasses the way in which the average English reader will identify the influence of television and the tabloids in Keith's speech, and the average Spanish one will not, but he or she will be able to identify the influence of the gypsy jargon in Cartucho's, and the English reader will not; the way in which a Spanish reader will recognise in *Tiempo de silencio* social types which are alien to British culture, and *vice versa*.

Keith is a crook, and so is Cartucho, but their idiolects cannot be exchanged in the respective translations of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, because each of these idiolects is anchored in a cultural frame which is very different to the other's. For instance, we could point out that Cartucho's interjections are very much in line with the prevalence of scatological and religious references in the Spanish repertoire of foul language, whereas Keith's obscenities are predominantly of a sexual nature.

All these devices, which trigger the recognition mechanisms for connotative meaning in the minds of the readers of the source text will be absent from the target text. In short: the true voice of the characters, to which their fellow native speakers can relate, will be lost. This may seem an obvious loss in every translation, but is particularly important in the case of two novels so deeply rooted in their cultural context. The complicity between each author through his creations and their respective native readers seems to exclude to a certain extent (and this is especially true in the case of *London Fields*) those who do not understand the scenario across which the characters move. All those subtle details which the reader of the original can apprehend just by “listening” to the voices in the novel and cannot be put into words within the text will necessarily be missing from the translation.



## Chapter 4: Proper names

### 1. Introduction

Generally speaking, the translation of the proper names of characters in contemporary literature in Spanish and in English does not pose serious problems, since the predominant convention seems to be that they are not translated<sup>70</sup>. This is a long-standing tradition, as proven by Sir John Trevisa's words in his translation of Ralph Higden's *Polychronicon*, which appeared in 1387 (Hermans, 1988: 11). Jacques Derrida claims in "Des Tours de Babel" that proper names are untranslatable, since they are "the reference of a pure signifier to a single being" (in Schulte & Biguenet, 1992: 219). And yet, the names of certain characters that appear in major literary works, such as those by William Shakespeare, are very often translated, or adapted to the target language's graphic representation of phonetics, maybe because they have come to be part of a universal heritage and each culture perceives them as its own to a certain extent. Also, the names of characters that appear in comics which are extensively read in many countries (the Asterix, Charlie Brown and Tintin stories, for instance) are very frequently translated in one way or another, in order to adapt them better to the target culture.

Other proper names (those of establishments, public places, geographical or urbanistic features, cities, animals and such) are sometimes translated or adapted, especially if they are phonetically strange or have a relevant denotative and/or connotative meaning. It can be the case that an accepted version of the source language name exists in the target language (for example: *London* and *Londres*, *Zaragoza* and *Saragossa*), in which case this accepted version should be used. As Judith Willis suggests in her article "Proper Names in *Camí de Sirga* by Jesús Moncada" (*Donaire*, 8 - junio 1997; pp. 74-78), the intended audience plays an important role when a decision as to which strategy to adopt has to be made: "translating for a general, non-specialist, non-academic audience [...] my aim was to make the text as accessible as possible to them, hoping that by translating certain elements [...] the novel could be recreated more effectively in their imaginations." (ibid.: 78).

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<sup>70</sup>Both Leeson and Moreno followed this convention when translating *Tiempo de silencio* and *London Fields*, respectively.

A consistent approach to the translation of proper names would appear to be the most sensible option. However, this is rarely a straightforward choice. Willis mentions “the problem almost always encountered of the fact that translatability is not spread evenly across whole categories.” (ibid.: 76), a problem which is likely to affect the coherence of the target text. As well as this difficulty, another significant factor ought to be taken into account when focusing on the matter of how to present proper names in translation.

The translation of proper names can have the negative effect of extracting them from their own cultural context. When this happens, the source text becomes domesticated to an extent and a transgression against the source culture takes place. The readers of the target text are presented with a series of characters, establishments, etc. which appear to belong in their own cultural context, the target context, which could be interpreted as a distortion or even a falsification of the original.

Theo Hermans remarks that literary texts occasionally show a concentration of what he calls ‘*motivated*’ or *consciously ‘loaded’ names*, as opposed to conventional names (1988: 13). He lists four possible kinds of translation for such names:

They can be copied, i.e. reproduced in the target text exactly as they were in the source text. They can be transcribed, i.e. transliterated or adapted on the level of spelling, phonology, etc. A formally unrelated name can be substituted in the target text for any given name in the source text [...]. And insofar as a proper name in a source text is enmeshed in the lexicon of that language and acquires ‘meaning’, it can be translated. (1988: 14)

The combination of some of those methods is also acceptable, as are alternative solutions, such as “**non-translation**, i.e. the deletion of a source-text proper name in the target text, and the replacement of a proper name by a **common noun** (usually denoting a structurally functional attribute of the character in question)” (ibid.).

Hervey and Higgins (1992: 30) mention three elements that have to be considered when translating proper names: in the first place, “existing options for translating a particular name”; secondly, “the implications of following a particular option”; and finally, “all the implications of a choice between exoticism” (the name is kept with no alteration), “transliteration” (the name is graphically or phonologically adapted to the target language and appears in this as the literal equivalent of the name in the source

text) and “cultural transplantation”<sup>71</sup> (names that are not the literal equivalent of the source language names are substituted for these, when they present similar cultural connotations) .

In the particular instance of *London Fields* failing to translate the names of certain characters could lead to the incomprehensibility of certain aspects of the source text by the readers of the target text. *Tiempo de silencio* also contains some names which bear a kind of meaning that, although it is not essential for the understanding of the text, complements the story in an indirect manner. Such names, of course, do not involve the same degree of difficulty when translating the source text as the type of names mentioned before.

## 2. *London Fields*

### 2.1. Names of characters

Martin Amis states on the first page of his essays collected under the title *The Moronic Inferno and Other Visits to America* (1986): “The way a writer names his characters provides a good index to the way he sees the world--to his reality level, his responsiveness to the accidental humour and freakish poetry of life”. The names he gives his characters are, indeed, very significant in this respect. In the words of a literary critic, Martin Amis’ fictional world is “a world of cartoon violence and miseries [...] still uncomfortably redolent of present-day England” (Harry Ritchie, *The Sunday Times*, 10 September 1989). This mixture of crude realism and hyperbolic description is the way in which the author projects in his novels his answer “to the accidental humour and freakish poetry of life”.

In a self-mocking episode, Martin Amis provides the reader with a sample of the text’s self-reference and its connections with reality. When Samson Young sends the first chapters of the novel that he is writing to his publishers (a novel which is, presumably, the very same the reader is holding in his/her hands, excepting, perhaps, the autobiographical structure) Janit Slotnick tells him, “We’re unhappy with the

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<sup>71</sup>This is the case of “Dupont et Dupond”, characters in the Tintin comics, who are named “Thompson & Thomson” in the English version of the books, and “Hernández y Fernández” in the Spanish one. The same happens with some of the characters in the Asterix the Gaul stories.

names, sir"; to which Samson replies: "No problem. I was going to change them, anyway" (LF: 160).

Regarding these interferences between fiction and reality, Andrew Calcutt, in an article in which he establishes a comparison between Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of Vanities* and *London Fields*, criticises Martin Amis' seeming inconsistencies in matter of literary technique: "Even as he is playing games with his characters' names and toying with notions of authorship that could have amused Flann O'Brien, he claims to be writing 'a true story', a 'documentary' " (*Living Marxism*, March 1990). The names of the characters that appear in *London Fields* (and Martin Amis is obsessed with christening even those who only get a passing mention in the novel and do not even take part in it) mirror the convolutedness of his prose. The Clinch's cleaner is called Auxiliadora ("she who helps") and their maidservants have names like Melba and Phoenix; the names of Mark Asprey's lovers alliterate with their geographical locations ("it's Ella from LA, it's Rhea from Rio, it's Merouka from Morocco", LF: 77); a pretty female model is coincidentally named *Pritti* (LF: 109); one of the barmen who work in Keith's favourite pub is God (short for Godfrey), and Shakespeare and Carlyle are counted among the regulars of this pub.

Throughout the pages of *London Fields* parade scores of characters, or rather, scores of characters' names. Everything in them suggests word-play: deformation, alliteration, anagram, etc. Some are quite transparent (*Trish Shirt* is a phonetic palindrome; *John Dark* is the corrupt policeman; *Zbig One*'s real name is *Zbigniew*, but he had to be somehow differentiated from *ZbigTwo*). Others respond to the author's fascination with the manipulation of language as some sort of private game, and they can only be apprehended by the reader with great difficulty, if at all. In this latter category belong what Melvyn Bragg called "the usual house jokes" (*The Listener*, 21 September 1989).

There is a case in which the source text narrator helps clarify the connotations of one of these names: at a certain point he describes Missy Harter "looking as prim as her name" (LF: 206), the kind of remark that is easily translatable ("con un aspecto tan remilgado como su nombre", CL: 258). In another case, however, it is his own cogitations on the name of one of the characters of marginal importance that bring on translatability problems: "*Chick* Purchase. *Chick*. It's hugely unsuitable for such a celebrated bruiser and satyromaniac. A diminutive of Charles. In America it's Chuck. In England, apparently, it's *Chick*. Some name. Some country..." (LF: 10). Here, it

seems pertinent to explain by means of a footnote in the target text that “chick” is a derogatory means of referring to a woman (CL: 22). Otherwise, the passage that has just been quoted would be totally lacking in meaning for a reader with little or no knowledge of the English language.

The names of the main characters (Keith Talent, Nicola Six, Guy and Hope Clinch, Samson Young), as well as that of one of the characters who does not even participate actively in the plot (Faith, the wife of the United States’ President) contribute to the thematic support of *London Fields*. Martin Amis was probably referring to this type of name when he said, “Other times the name is more or less everything; it determines everything about the character” (in *Contemporary Authors*, 1988: 23). It is unquestionable that the importance of these names is greater than that of those that merely respond to a playful or comic purpose (although they sometimes demarcate an interesting referential frame within the novel). The clarification of the names belonging to the first group is arguably essential (if the assumption is that the main task of the translator is to make the source text understandable for the readers of the target text), whereas an elucidation of those belonging to the second group could be considered irrelevant. Thus, Dink Heckler, Chick Purchase, Dean Plate, Dr. Slizard, Sheridan Sick, Steve Stultifier and Tony de Taunton would have to remain as such, and the meaning, connotative or denotative, of their names, unknown to those readers who do not understand English.

#### 2.1.1. The Talents

##### 2.1.1.1. Keith

no character called Keith can survive in an Amis’s novel unscathed. (Richard Brown; *Contemporary Novelists*. Chicago & London: St. James Press, 1991)

To a Spanish reader, the connotation of low social status that a name like “Keith” has in the British culture would most probably go unnoticed. Martin Amis had used it before for one of his characters, which hints at some intentionality in the choice of a name for Mr Talent. In his novel *Dead Babies*, Martin Amis depicts a Keith Whitehead, whose meanness and moral baseness find a mirror in a physique which is so repulsive that borders on the inhuman.

The narrator starts the chapter that he devotes to the introduction of Keith Talent in the novel describing him as “a bad guy [...] a very bad guy” (LF: 4). This introduction



participates in the play on parallelisms and contrasts, the doubles game, which recurs throughout the fictional works of Martin Amis<sup>72</sup>: when the name of Guy Clinch is mentioned in the novel for the first time, it is accompanied by the specification “a good guy” (LF: 27). This, in itself, constitutes a new reduplication, because of the first name of the character. The appearance of a character called Keith Double, in chapter one, is yet another iteration, more explicit, in this case, of the resource to doubles. Keith Double, “also a young *cheat*, also a dartsman” (LF: 8), starts his career in a similar manner to Talent’s, but, as it is frequently the case in Martin Amis’ fiction, he ends up his opposite, becoming everything Keith Talent is not, having everything Keith Talent has not: “Keith Double was in advertising now, and had frequently returned to America. Keith hadn’t; he was still cheating in the streets of London” (LF: 8-9). There is even a spare Keith in the novel, one Keith Spare, footballer, who receives a couple of mentions in the review of a match (LF: 91).

Although the connotations of his first name are lost in the target text, his social condition, at which these connotations hint, is clear. The translation loss is, therefore, not one of content. Rather, it is of a stylistic nature, since the fixation with the repetition of notions and their reproduction in several narrative spheres is typical of the hyper-elaboration to which Martin Amis subjects his texts.

This character’s surname is, fortunately for the translator, very similar to the Spanish “*talento*”, although this term does not comprise the polysemy of its English counterpart. “Talent” is often used in an informal manner to refer to the members of the opposite sex, especially those who possess a certain appeal for the speaker, and, in consequence, is a reflection of Keith’s promiscuity. In the numerous instances of word-play which the surname prompts throughout the novel, the translator can utilise a graphical recourse, such as the use of italics, to emphasise the effect intended by the author. For instance, “he just didn’t have the talent” (LF: 5) could read in the target text, “es que carecía de *talento*”/ “es que carecía del *talento* necesario”; “He had the talent, somewhere” (LF: 9), could appear as “Tenía ese *talento*, en alguna parte”. Yet resorting to this kind of strategy is not always valid, because the translation of certain expressions requires the usage of other terms, as illustrated by “Talentedly, Nicola

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<sup>72</sup>Karl Miller remarks in *Doubles. Studies in Literary History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; p.411) that the origin of the characteristic combination of authorial intrusion and the obsession with orphans and doubles in Martin Amis’ fiction can be traced back to a Gothic text, *Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, written by James Hogg and published in 1824.

was wearing a charcoal business suit”, LF: 331 (“Hábilmente, Nicola llevaba...” CL: 404).

#### 2.1.1.2. Kim

As well as contributing to the phonetic regularity of the first names of the Talents (**Keith**, **Kath** and **Kim** are three anaphoric monosyllabic names), the baby’s name is also part of the doubles motif in the novel. Keith’s greatest hero is Kim Twemlow, the previous darts world-champion. He shares his first name with Keith’s daughter, and, besides, the first part of his surname sounds very similar to “twin”, in a continuation of the play on doubles that characterises the novel<sup>73</sup>. The translation problems that this presents are far from great, for its significance within the novel is minimal.

#### 2.1.2. The Clinches

The different meanings of this surname range from the slang “lovers’ embrace” to a boxing or wrestling grasp in order to avoid being hit. And the Clinch’s sex life certainly oscillates between them both. Martin Amis probably did not give the couple names more appropriate to their semi-aristocratic condition (the contrast with “Marmaduke” is clear) because “Guy” and “Hope” (née “Broadener”) serve his thematic purposes better.

##### 2.1.2.1. Guy

Guy Clinch occupies a prominent position in the plot. He is *the good guy*, whereas Keith Talent is *the bad guy*. The opposition between these two characters goes back to their ancestors: Guy’s father was praised and decorated for his courage in the war, where he served as an officer (LF: 153); Keith’s father, on the other hand, served as a cook until the date of his desertion (LF: 164). Keith and Guy represent a dissociation of masculine qualities, in the same way as Kim Talent and Marmaduke Clinch represent a polarisation of childhood’s virtues and evils, respectively. Martin Amis said in an interview published in *City Limits* (21-28 September 1989), “Any parent will tell you that each child is both heaven and hell, a torturer and an angel. It is typical

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<sup>73</sup>It is also worth noting that Mr Melvin Twemlow is a character in *Our Mutual Friend*, by Charles Dickens, whose vast influence on Martin Amis has been sufficiently proven by the critics and admitted by the author himself.

of my way of writing to separate those two things, just as Guy Clinch (the rich, upright fall-guy<sup>74</sup>) and Keith are a separation of the male impulse.”

To emphasise the opposition between these two characters in the target text, the translator can take advantage of the words which are used to introduce Keith in the source text, “Let’s start with the bad guy” (LF: 3), and elaborate Guy’s own introduction (“And I am now cultivating our third party, the foil, the foal, Guy Clinch”, LF: 14) by means of an adjective that would clarify his stand in the novel. Expressions such as “el bueno de Guy Clinch”, or even, “Guy Clinch, el bueno” would serve this purpose, and also reinforce the “whydoit” (LF: 3) atmosphere, the suspense-story tone. The antagonistic relation between Guy and Keith could also be indicated by the use of the Spanish clichés, “el bueno”, and “el malo” (CL: 14). However, these do not collocate with “tipo”. To compensate this loss of information, a footnote in which the meaning of the term “guy” was explained could be included in the target text.

From the beginning, the readers know that the climax of the novel, Nicola’s murder, will happen on November 5, during the nocturnal celebrations of Guy Fawkes’ Day. What is commemorated on that day is the discovery of the Gunpowder Plot, contrived by Guy Fawkes to blow up James I and the Houses of Parliament, in 1605. All over the country, effigies of the conspirator are burnt, and fireworks and rockets are lit in a celebration that resembles that of St. John’s Day in Spain. This question will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 7, due to its importance within *London Fields*.

As well as the implicit connections (Guy is a rag doll being consumed on the metaphoric pyre of his love for Nicola), near the end of the novel there appear several direct allusions to the “guys” burning in bonfires, and to the children that beg, “Penny for the guy?”. It is anticipated that “Soon, all over London, a thousand, a million guys would be burning, burning” (LF: 451). In connection with Nicola’s death, the narrator gives his readers a clue on the murderer’s identity: “It isn’t Keith. It’s the other guy” (LF: 435). It is not Keith, but it is not Guy either: it is the other *guy*, the other man, Samson Young. The loss of this clue in the target text seems unavoidable, unless a footnote is included to clarify the allusion. Moreno’s note (“Juego de palabras entre *guy* [tipo] y el personaje *Guy*.”), however, is misleading in the light of the novel’s ending.

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<sup>74</sup>This expression, with its American English meaning of “scapegoat” or “cheated fool” also appears in the novel (LF: 240).

#### 2.1.2.2. Hope

The name of the wife of the President of the United States of America is Faith. With the name of Guy's wife, Hope, that makes two of the cardinal virtues that occupy, at least nominally, a prominent place in the novel. The third one, *charity* is conspicuous by its absence, as a character's name and in itself, thus echoing one of the novel's themes. There are literal equivalents for both names in Spanish ("Fe" and "Esperanza", respectively), but their inclusion in the target text, in an attempt to facilitate the understanding of this allusion to the lack of charity, would mean a breach of the consistency in the non-translation of proper names. Perhaps, the best solution would be clarify the issue in a footnote, or insert the translations of the names in the target text, when the context allowed for some word-play in this respect. In the case that this were not possible, or the translator considered it irrelevant, the translation loss would not be fundamental. However, the fact that this play on names creates an interesting ideological frame for the plot, means compensation is highly desirable.

#### 2.1.2.3. Marmaduke

Marmaduke Clinch, in contrast with his parents, was christened by Martin Amis with an unusual name, which matches his patrician condition. This name also connects him with the main character in a cartoon series, *Heathcliff*<sup>75</sup> and *Marmaduke*, in yet another cross-media reference of the many that pervade *London Fields*. In this series, Marmaduke is a Great Dane. The destructive powers of the baby, whose nails have to be clipped, in order to diminish the effects of his devastating activity as much as possible, make him equal to the most vicious of dogs. His description as "a man-cub" (LF: 29) reinforces the animalistic features of Marmaduke. It is plain from the text that Marmaduke is a little savage and, therefore, the loss of the implicit reference to a dog does not overshadow his characterisation. Consequently, the compensation of the translation loss would not appear necessary in this case.

#### 2.1.2.4. Lizziboo Broadener

Lizziboo, Hope's sister, unmarried, has retained her family name. Considering that she becomes bulimic, Broadener has humoristic connotations: she certainly gets

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<sup>75</sup>It is worth remembering here that Keith sees himself as the Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (see p. 180).

“broader”. This is a comic twist that will be lost in translation, since it would be inappropriate to give an American character a Spanish surname that would echo the connotations of the English one.

### 2.1.3. Nicola Six

The name of the main female character, Nicola Six, also plays an important role in the word-play which is omnipresent in *London Fields*. The number of the flat she lives in, in a dead-end street, is six, and she knows (and the readers know), thanks to a sixth sense, that she is going to die on the day of her thirty-sixth (six times six) birthday, in the early hours of November 6. the deliberate ambiguity of her surname is expounded in her first conversation with Keith Talent:

‘What’s your name, sweetheart?’  
She told him. Keith couldn’t believe his luck.  
‘Sex!’  
‘S-i-x. Actually it’s Six.’  
‘Seeks! Relax, Nicky. We get all sorts in here...’  
(LF: 37)

David Sexton wrote, “The heroine of *London Fields*, Nicola Six (sex, sick sex, seeks cease too, if you pronounce it in French as Martin assuredly does) wants to be murdered” (*The Sunday Correspondent*, 17 September 1989). As well as these phonological ambiguities, which may appear more or less humorous, apocalyptic echoes can also be found in Nicola’s surname: “She really did a number on him [Guy Clinch]. What was that number? It was Six. Six. Six.”<sup>76</sup> (LF: 97), or, in Keith’s dart-obsessed mind, “Double 3. 6.6.6.” (LF: 405). In the Bible, 666 is the number of the beast, and, to strengthen this connection, Nicola becomes “Old Nick” (a familiar name for the devil) on two occasions (LF: 386 and 405). Moreno’s translations, “la querida Nicky” (CL: 470), and “Mi vieja Nick” (CL: 491), obscure the allusion, but the context provided by the Biblical reference would be understandable for both source-text and target-text readers.

In order to anticipate a solution to the translatability problems that will occur as the plot unfolds, this character could be introduced in the target text as “Nicola Six, Nicola Seis, Nicola Sexo”. The source text simply reads, “I always assumed I’d start with the

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<sup>76</sup>James Diedrick ignores the apocalyptic resonances and interprets the passage in a different way: “Pronouncing her name repeatedly in this way yields “sick”, a word with special relevance to Nicola’s symbolic role in the novel” (1995: 154).



murderer, with her, with Nicola Six.” (LF: 3). However, the addition proposed above seems well-justified, especially because it would fit the original threefold pattern nicely (the three *with*). Besides, enumeration and repetition are characteristic of Martin Amis’ style, and thus the abovementioned addition would not look out of place. And yet, this strategy is not sufficient to reproduce in the target text all the semantic potential that the phonology of the English term originates: “Nicola Seeks” and “Nicola Cease” would be lost in the Spanish version. This is, nevertheless, a minor loss.

#### 2.1.4. Samson Young

The narrator’s name, Samson Young, evokes images of vitality and strength. He is, however, a character weak in the body and the spirit, unable to assume control over his own existence. And, to make things worse, he is on the brink of death. The allusion to *Samson Agonistes* (LF: 87) seems to mirror the condition of this character. The published translation of *London Fields* into Spanish does not clarify this point: it just misquotes the title of Milton’s poem (1671), “Sansón agonista” (CL: 114). Spanish readers with no knowledge of the English language or literature will not be enlightened in this respect, whereas a rendition as “Sansón agonizante” would have favoured the understanding of the connotations in the target text. Thus it would be easier to grasp the irony contained in the name and rather sinisterly echoed by the literary reference: Samson is really agonising. And, as happened to the biblical character, his final perdition will come through a woman.

## 2.2. Names of places

### 2.2.1. Topographical names

Without looking any further than the cover of *London Fields*, a “loaded” topographical name can be found. The title of the novel, which refers to an area in the north of London, can be interpreted in more than one sense: “Instead of farmers’ fields London now has fields of a different nature: fields of operation, of interest and influence, attraction and repulsion.” (Helen Davidson, in *Scotland on Sunday*, 24 September 1989).

Allusions to London streets, neighbourhoods and parks (Portobello Road, Swiss Cottage, West Hampstead, Chelsea, London Fields, etc.) pervade *London Fields* from

beginning to end. These names will sound familiar to the British reader, who will, generally, be able to associate them with a certain type of atmosphere and character. The same names will not, however, prompt any kind of memory echoes in the average Spanish reader.

Nevertheless, on most occasions, the context offers some clues as to identify the kind of places that they are. If, for example, the readers of the target text are told that Keith Talent lives somewhere in “West London” (LF: 5), they will assume that it is an underprivileged area, regardless of the fact that different social classes co-habit in that part of town. In the same way, if the readers see Talent frequenting the cafés in Golborne Rd. (ibid.), they can infer that those are disreputable establishments. From Samson Young’s reaction when he sees the taximeter and the surrounding buildings as he wakes up in Keith’s pirate cab it follows that Slough (LF: 11) lies outside the boundaries of London city and that it does not look very hospitable.

When a generic topographic name (such as “road”, “street”, “square”, etc.) is mentioned in conjunction with a specific proper name, the translation possibilities are three:

- a. Both names can be translated.
- b. The specific name can be left untranslated, whereas the generic name is translated.
- c. Neither name is translated (the strategy favoured by Moreno).

Sometimes, however, it is not the actual meaning of the name(s) which poses translation difficulties, but rather its connotations. The mention of a given road or area is more likely to trigger associations in source culture readers than in readers who belong in the target culture. The problem, once more, may lie beyond the text itself and hinge on external (cultural) factors. The loss presents, in these cases, an extra-textual nature, and does not affect the translator’s activity *per se*.

Most of the action in *London Fields* action takes place in the Ladbroke Grove area, notorious for the way in which richness and poverty, sophistication and vulgarity live there side by side<sup>77</sup>. The author deliberately chose to circumscribe his narrative scope

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<sup>77</sup>Richard Rayner described Ladbroke Grove as a place “where poverty and wealth meet to fizzling effect” (*The Sunday Telegraph*, 17 September 1989) and Martin Amis himself, describing his

to such a restricted area, in order to present his readers with a microcosm, representative of British society, in which the boundaries between classes are firmly delineated in people's minds, despite the fact that contact between those classes and their very physical proximity is an everyday matter. Boyd Tonkin summarised the mixture of local and global in the following words: "How does he [Martin Amis] cram this universal angst into a tale of sex, darts and impending murder confined to his usual crumbling beat in Notting Hill? Through metaphor, scenery, weather and a few plays that sound a touch contrived" (*City Limits*, 21-28 September 1989).

That the meaning or the implications of certain names in London's urban topography are lost in the target text has to be explained in cultural, rather than linguistic, terms. It is worth remembering here that the question of whether the translated text should produce in its readers the same effect that the original text produces in its own is a debatable one. In principle, this represents an impossible ideal, but it can be used as a working hypothesis. If we subscribe to such a premise, we are implying that the names of places ought to be clarified in the target text, for they are alien to the target culture and the readers would not understand their signification. If, on the other hand, we assume that the translator does not need to explain the text, but rather to reproduce it in a different language, we are accepting the fact that this kind of clarification is unnecessary. To mention but one, this is the case of "the Harley Street doctor" (LF: 155). If, unlike Moreno, the translator considered it important to include additional information in the target text in order to favour the transmission of the sort of associations that this phrase would evoke in the readers of the source text, s/he could incorporate a clarification like "el *prestigioso* doctor de Harley Street/la calle Harley". Equally, the mention of Oxford Street and Bishopgate (LF: 6) would become, "las *populares zonas comerciales* de Oxford Street y Bishopgate"; etc.

We can also distinguish another kind of placenames in *London Fields*, whose purpose is to move the reader to laughter. Such are the names of the cities where Nicola Six pretends to have tracked her imaginary friend, Enola Gay, down, Phu Qoc and Kampot, as well as that of the tower block where the Talents' flat is located, "Windsor House". These names rely on different elements to provoke hilarity. In the case of the Asiatic names, the author resorts to phonetic ambiguity (*Phu Qoc* is reminiscent of terms having to do with sexual activities; *Kampot* can be divided into two units,

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impressions from lunch-time strolls in the area, noted that "You can see a pub round there and go in and find yourself in some pre-war hell of moist carpets and truculent-looking guys hunched over their drinks. Another might have parasols and cocktail lists." (ibid.).

“camp” and “pot”). The difficulty in translating these names lies in the fact that similar phonetical (de)formations would have to be found in Spanish to preserve the comical effect. On the other hand, the understanding of the humour in the name of the building where Keith and his family live hinges on cultural factors: Windsor is the official name of the British royal family, and the fact that a dilapidated building inhabited by characters of dubious reputation is named after them constitutes an attack on the reigning dynasty.

To sum up: topography in *London Fields* does not create any linguistic translatability problems generally. The main difficulties that arise belong to the domain of the extra-textual, of cultural implications. They hinge on the gap between source culture and target culture, which explains the (hypothetical, but likely) familiarity of the readers who belong to the former with the connotations of the names in question, and the lack of knowledge of these connotations in the readers who belong to the latter. The exception to this are the names which present a comical function on the basis of their phonological structure. The solution to this problem depends, therefore, on the linguistic possibilities of the target language for creating puns of a similar nature.

#### 2.2.2. Pubs, restaurants and other commercial establishments

Failure to translate the names of the pubs in which much of *London Fields*'s action takes place can result in a loss of information that supplements the plot and has, therefore, considerable importance within the novel. Whereas the name “The Golgotha” does not pose any comprehensibility problems for the Spanish reader, the religious echoes of “The Black Cross” (the place where the four main characters in *London Fields* meet) would appear diluted in the target text, as would be the parody in the presentation of Keith as “the Knight of the Black Cross” (LF: 23), who, coincidentally, drives a Cavalier (an adjective which also suits his attitude extremely well).

According to Bernard (1997: 170), the latter pub “is aptly called The Black Cross, in an ironic and grotesque inversion of both the Christian and the analogical paradigms”. The image of the cross recurs throughout Martin Amis’ fiction. The plane as a “crucifix of the heavens” also appears in other novels (see, for example, *Other People*, p. 18). In *London Fields*, as well as this metaphor, other allusions to such an image: the sun, as seen from Pluto, is a “cruciform” star (LF: 154); the woman whom Samson Young can see from his window stands in the middle of the road every

evening “with her head up and her arms outstretched: cruciform” (LF: 305); when the narrator parodically describes Cornelia Constantine, the female protagonist in Mark Asprey’s novel, he speaks of “the crux of her muscular buttocks” (LF: 325).

But the image of the cross also holds structural value in *London Fields*: Samson Young, the fictional narrator, uses it in order to establish graphically the relation between the protagonists, and the implications of this relation in the final twist of the plot: “I should have understood that a cross has four points. Not three.” (LF: 466). In consequence, the name of “The Black Cross” ought to be explained, if only at this point (as Moreno does, CL: 261), in order to make the recurrence of the Christian symbol easily perceivable in the target text, especially, in view of its importance as a clue towards the resolution of the plot.

The way in which Martin Amis christens the pubs he presents in *London Fields* parodies the kind of names sported by real establishments of this kind: “Butcher’s Arms”, (LF: 326); “Chuckling Sparrow” (LF: 457). At a certain point in the novel, a humorous allusion is made to a group of names which are very common amongst English pubs: those corresponding with titles of the nobility. In the impoverished area where Keith Talent lives, “All you had to do was step into the street and you were surrounded by royalty. The Prince Albert, the Duke of Clarence, the Earl of Warwick. Maharajah Wines” (LF: 109). In cases like these it also seems appropriate to translate literally the names of the establishments, so that the irony is easily identifiable in the target text. However, some indication as to the nature of the establishments would need to be included, in order to avoid ambiguity. Moreno’s translation could be confusing for target-text readers: “No tenía uno más que salir a la calle para verse rodeado enseguida por la realeza. El príncipe Alberto, el duque de Clarence, el conde de Warwick. Vinos Maharajah.” (CL: 139).

In the enumeration quoted above, Martin Amis uses a period to separate the last name from the ones that have appeared immediately before, separated by commas. This could be either because it designates an off-licence, i.e. a place where alcohol can be purchased, but not consumed, in contrast with all the others, or because it provides the exotic note in the list, the one that makes it “multicultural”. Also, it could be interpreted as an ironic reference to non-drinking religions which lend names to alcohol-selling outlets. In relation to this point, it seems important to remark that Martin Amis very often ridicules British post-imperialism. His criticism of the colonial system is materialised in *London Fields* in the form of the names of Keith’s favourite



restaurants: “Amritsar”<sup>78</sup> (LF: 54), “Indian Mutiny” (LF: 56), and “Retreat from Kabul”<sup>79</sup> (LF: 198).

Although the episodes of England’s colonial past are, strictly speaking, irrelevant to the source text, it would be desirable that, when possible, the names of the restaurants would appear translated in the target text (“Motín en la India”, “Retirada de Kabul”, for instance)<sup>80</sup>, so that the Spanish-speaking reader could be in a position to guess the intentionality behind them. Nevertheless, facilitating an understanding of the sarcastic overtones of the names of the restaurants, in the light of their historical background, would involve an alienation of these establishments from the British cultural context to which they belong and, it should be remembered, in which they gain their comic quality.

The name of a restaurant greatly favoured by Lizzyboo Broadener, Hope Clinch’s younger sister, during her bulimic phase has to be ascribed to a different category. “Fatty’s” (LF: 283 and 409), very appropriately, is famous for the highly calorific food which is served there: milkshakes, ice-creams, sundaes, cakes, and other equally fattening kinds of desserts. The term “fatty” will probably induce the right sort of response in the reader of the target text, since it is a word relatively well-known in the hispanic ambit. Moreno probably played on this familiarity when he transposed the name into the target text (CL: 347 and 497). However, a translation like “Gordo’s” would also be appropriate, to ensure that the original comic effect is preserved.

As indicated above, Moreno did not systematically apply one strategy, which could lead to comprehensibility problems (as is the case with the names of pubs which allude to nobility, see above). The possibility of translating the names of pubs, restaurants and similar establishments consistently, i.e. translating them even in the cases where cross-linguistic and cross-cultural understanding is guaranteed, such as “The Golgotha”, is an appealing one, especially in view of their restricted appearance in the source text. Alternatively, if non-translation is chosen as a strategy (for example, because the translator prefers to maintain the Britishness of the original in the target

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<sup>78</sup> A city which was annexed to British India in 1849, was also the site of a massacre in 1919, in which British troops charged against of unarmed supporters of Indian self-government who were attending a political meeting.

<sup>79</sup> Kabul was also the scene of a carnage, but in this case it was the British who suffered the most severe losses: several of their garrisons were slaughtered there in 1842, during the first Anglo-Afghan war.

<sup>80</sup> Moreno, however, chose to translate only the latter (“La Retirada de Kabul”, CL: 247), and left the former in English (CL: 78).

text), it could be carried out in the same consistent manner, and the potential losses compensated when necessary.

In *London Fields* there appear several mentions to fictitious establishments whose names parody real commercial names. The name “GoodFicks” (LF: 113 and 326), a repair place (a “fix”, phonetically identical to “Ficks” is, in American English, a very poor job), would seem to mimic the real trade name *Kwik-Fit*, although it also makes a plausible drug allusion, since the homophonic “fix” is slang for an injected dose. Similarly, a baked-potato selling shop (a very popular “institution” in Great Britain, yet completely alien to the Spanish culture) receives the name “Potato Love” (LF: 326 and 399), in imitation of real denominations, such as *Potatoland*. At the same time, this refers the knowledgeable reader to one of the writers most admired by Martin Amis, Saul Bellow, who coined this expression, “potato love”, in his novel *Herzog*<sup>81</sup>. This is an example of how the profusion of elements that pose translatability problems in *London Fields* leads to the superimposition of categories, in this case, those of trademarks and literary allusion. The latter will most certainly pass unnoticed by the average Spanish reader, for reasons which will be explained in the chapter dedicated to intertextuality (Chapter 6).

Moreno opted for copying the source-text terms (“GoodFicks”, CL: 144 and 399; and “Potato Love”, CL: 399 and 486). The comic effect of these names will only be evident to those readers who are familiar with the source culture, which means that this kind of humour will, in all likelihood, be missing from the target text, since the literal reproduction of such names lacks any meaning in Spanish, not only in so much as the linguistic aspect is concerned, but also and more importantly because their connotations will not be apprehended in the target culture. An alternative would be making up names which imitate those of real Spanish establishments and substitute them in the target text for the originals. However, one has to bear in mind that this procedure would result in a trespass of the cultural boundaries, which would only be admissible if the translator has decided to produce a target culture-oriented text.

Other names bank on means more strictly linguistic, independent of cultural associations, in order to achieve a comic effect: the firm that published Samson

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<sup>81</sup> “*Perhaps you did contribute something useful in the last decade, showing us the old-fashioned self-intensity of the ‘humanist,’ the look of the ‘intelligent man’ grieving at the loss of his private life, sacrificed to public service. Bah! The general won because he expressed low-grade universal potato love*” (Bellow 1964: 66; italics in the original).

Young's *Memoirs of a Listener* was called "Handicraft Press" (LF: 301), and the company to which the narrator is signed when writing his last novel is Hornig Ultrason (LF: 39; "Hornig" resembling phonetically the colloquial *horny*). The reproduction of the farcical aspect of these names in the target text is far from essential, since they are not relevant to the plot itself. However, if the translator, like Moreno, opts for such a solution, a loss would occur: the meticulousness that characterises Martin Amis' style, the fastidious attention to detail, which is revealed in the careful choice of denominations for elements that are comparatively insignificant in the novel, would not be reproduced. It seems, in consequence, that some translation losses will have to be accepted in this area, although the parodic overtones can be hinted at in the target text by means of additional remarks in this respect.

An example of a real name that might cause comprehensibility problems to the reader of the target text is "Pinewood" (LF: 144). The allusion to the famous English cinematographic studios cannot be inferred from the context with sufficient clarity: "the usual pistol-grips and worn webbing of too much video equipment (his own house was a Pinewood of these inexpensive toys)". This company is very popular in the source culture, but its name will not be necessarily recognised by the readers of the target text. In consequence, either an indication about the nature of this term is included, or the name itself is deleted from the target text and the institution which it refers to is mentioned by its general denomination ("su propio hogar estaba tan lleno de estos juguetes baratos como un estudio cinematográfico", for example). Moreno opted for what appears to be a translation of the proper name ("su propia casa era una selva de estos juguetes más bien baratos", CL: 182), results in a certain incongruity in the target text.

### 3. *Tiempo de silencio*

The main difference with *London Fields* in this category is that very few proper names appear in *Tiempo de silencio*. The reason for this can be interpreted in the light of Martín-Santos' intention to write a story which would serve as a mirror for post-war Spanish society in its entirety.

### 3.1. Names of characters

Domingo (1973: 111) finds the lack of depth in the characters of *Tiempo de silencio* detrimental to the novel: “La novela flaquea, no obstante, en el tratamiento de los personajes, que en su mayoría son muñecos, marionetas grotescas dadas en superficie, nunca en profundidad.” It would appear that he overlooked the reason why this is the case. The story is, to an extent, intended as an exemplary tale and the characters in *Tiempo de silencio* stand for whole collectives: Pedro is the visionary academic; Matías and his milieu represent the upper classes; Dorita’s family, the impoverished lower middle-class with military connections; Amador, the immigrant working class; el Muecas and his circle, the outcasts of society, the underclass. We do not know much about their personal life or background. Only one of them has a surname, which surfaces at a very late stage: el Muecas’s real name is revealed as Pablo González on page 245. Some of them receive the denomination which derives from their occupation (“el Director”, Ts: 256).

Pedro is the most “round” character in the novel, the rest of them being practically “flat”. But not even of the main character do the readers get a detailed profile. The reason for this, as Gil Casado remarks (1968: 284), is that “Pedro no está concebido con el propósito de ahondar en su íntima personalidad, sino que sus actos y pensamientos tienen significado simbólico.”

The meaning of the characters’ names in *Tiempo de silencio* is not as closely interlinked with the plot as the meaning of those of the *London Fields* characters’ names. In the novel that Martín-Santos left unfinished when he died, *Tiempo de destrucción*, resorting to the addition of a more or less transparent meaning to the names of the characters is exploited to a larger extent, as proven by the appearance of an “Amigoff” and an “Anquilostom”

In some cases, the names of *Tiempo de silencio* characters bear a symbolic significance, a knowledge of which adds to the meaning of the novel. However, ignorance of the same does not entail a lesser understanding of the action. The translation of these names can therefore be overlooked without causing any important translation loss. It is, nevertheless, interesting to point out the “hidden” aspects that a reader aware of the meaning of the names can extract from *Tiempo de silencio*.



### 3.1.1. Pedro

Pedro is a man trapped in a time of silence. His name “simboliza la petrificación de una sociedad inerte” (Labanyi, 1985: 73). The Spanish version shares a common etymology with its English counterpart: the Greek *petra* (“rock, stone”). As a result, there would be no difference in the potential understanding of the connotations of this name by source- and target-text readers.

### 3.1.2. Matías

The connotations of the name “Matías” remain concealed in the novel until a distortion of the same appears in a Greek expression: “Mataiotas [...] cai panta mataiotas” (LF: 233-34). This expression is taken from Ecclesiastes 1:2: “ ‘Meaningless!’ / says the Teacher. / ‘Utterly meaningless!/Everything is meaningless.’ ”, or, in Spanish, “¡Vanidad de vanidades! -dice Cohélet- ¡vanidad de vanidades, todo vanidad!”.

The Spanish version is more versatile from a semantic point of view. Although, according to the José Ángel Ubieta, who translated Ecclesiastes for the version of the Bible quoted above, the source-text term only alludes to “lo ilusorio de las cosas y, en consecuencia, la decepción que éstas le reservan al hombre”, the Spanish “vanidad” can be also interpreted as “vanity, conceit, frivolity”. These three terms, which, alongside with “meaninglessness”, will most certainly be evoked by the source text passage to all those who understand its meaning, name qualities which can be easily associated with Matías<sup>82</sup>.

Matías’ middle-class existence is somewhat inane. He has obviously led an easy, troubleless life, and decided to play the mildly rebellious, bohemian card. He fails to save Pedro from the police, despite his efforts to rally his powerful, influential friends in his support. His subsequent attempts at getting Pedro out of the prison are also unsuccessful. In Pedro’s moment of defeat, when he has to leave Madrid in search of a barren future in the provinces, Matías also fails to be by his side (Ts: 286).

The translation of the Biblical verse seems redundant, since no explanation is offered in the source text (Leeson simply transliterated the Greek quotation into the target text: “*Mataiotes, kai panta Mataiotes*”, TS: 193). The futility of Matías’ existence can be

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<sup>82</sup>Following the biblical connection, it is worth noting that Matthias was chosen to replace Judas amongst the Apostles (Acts, 1: 26).



inferred from the pages of *Tiempo de silencio* in either language, if the reader chooses to interpret it so.

### 3.1.3. Amador

This character is once ironically identified as “el bien amado Amador” (Ts: 126), an expression which plays with the meaning of the name of the character (“he who loves”). Leeson’s literal translation does not reflect the irony, or give a clue as to the meaning of the name: “the well-loved Amador” (TS: 103). On his way to “exile”, Pedro muses “Amador, Amador tienes nombre de hombre fatal” (Ts: 289). This expression is rendered by G. Leeson as “Amador, Amador, you have a fatal name” (TS: 242). The original expression is, in fact a play on words, which is lost in the published translation. The meaning of the name “Amador” is “he who loves”. Martín-Santos adapts the cliché “mujer fatal” (a seductive woman who makes men love her, only to betray their love, a *femme fatale*) to suit his character (“hombre fatal”). Thus, he conveys the element of betrayal suffered by Pedro by virtue of his association with Amador. The translator could compensate for this loss by introducing an explanation in the target text, and trying to reproduce the pun. For example: “Amador, Lover, yours is the name of an *homme fatal*”.

### 3.1.4. Ricarda-Encarna

Some critics (e.g. Rey, 1977: 48) have seen Cervantine echoes in the names given to Muecas’s wife, who is referred to as Ricarda on page 61 (TS: 49) and as Encarna on page 245 (TS: 203). Sancho’s wife, in *Don Quixote*, is given five different names. That Martín-Santos felt the deepest admiration for Cervantes’ writings is indisputable. However, this does not imply that giving this character two different names constitutes a tacit homage to him.

The author probably just forgot the name that he had given Ricarda nearly two hundred pages earlier, and christened her again. The fact that Dorita’s mother is, in her own mother’s memories, Carmencita (Ts: 21; referred to as “the girl” in TS: 15, perhaps in an attempt by the translator to amend the error), and she becomes Dora for the rest of the book seems to confirm this theory<sup>83</sup>. However, critics seem to have passed this over or chosen to ignore it. It would, therefore, seem pointless to attract the attention

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<sup>83</sup>Of course, depending on the point of view, this could also help reinforce the Cervantine theory.

of the target text reader towards this fact, which, once again, is very possibly bypassed by the great majority of source-text readers.

### 3.1.5. Florita

Ricarda-Encarna is a Mother-Earth figure, in her representation of primitive instincts. The terms in which she is described underpin this implicit characterisation: “grueso cuerpo de mujer casi redondo [...] traía una de las faldas que cual capas concéntricas acebolladas la recubrían” (Ts: 61); “en aquella tierra apenas modificada que ocupaba el hueco de su cráneo”, “ella misma se siente parte de la tierra caliente” (Ts:246), “este ser de tierra” (Ts: 247), etc.

In line with this presentation of the character in the novel, her daughter’s name is Flora. Flora, accordingly, resembles a flower (“Los muslos de la muerta habían caído como grandes pétalos”, Ts: 134). The name Flora is also used in English. Therefore, no further explanation is required in the target text.

Other names do not seem to bear any relation to the contents of the novel. This is the case of Similiano (familiar abbreviation of Maximiliano), don Óscar (Ts: 15; possibly, the director of the institute where Pedro works), don Manolo (Ts: 39), or don Eulogio (Ts: 266). However, there is a subcategory that requires special mention: nicknames. Nicknames are usually conferred upon a person as a result of some peculiar trait, either physical or psychological, and, therefore, have a meaning. In *Tiempo de silencio* several nicknames appear, which were copied into the published translation of the novel.

### 3.1.6. Muecas

*Muecas* means “grimaces”. There is a direct allusion to the meaning of this term in the novel: “agitado por la rítmica tempestad del tic nervioso al que debía su apodo” (Ts: 58). Towards the end of the novel, an explanation of the origin of his nickname is offered: he acquired it “a causa de los incontenibles tics que como residuo le dejara la corea” (Ts: 245).

Leeson translated these two mentions literally: “twitching with the rhythmic storm of the nervous tic from which he derived his name” (TS: 47) and “because of the

uncontrollable facial tic resulting from an attack of St. Vitus' dance" (TS: 203). The presence of these explicit mentions of the semantic content of the character's name would seem to call for some sort of clarification in the target text, if the name is going to be imported without changes. It can be assumed that the target-text readers will not know the meaning of "muecas"; on the other hand, it could be argued that the passages quoted above may help them infer it. Alternatively, the term of address could be translated by a familiar name, such as "Twitchy". Once again, the potential problem is that a target culture-oriented translation would be produced.

### 3.1.7. Cartucho

*Cartucho* means "cartridge". The connotations of violence of this name are clear, and have been noted by several critics: "Según lo sugiere su apodo, Cartucho representa la violencia ciega." (Labanyi, 1985: 107); "Su nombre revela un carácter peligroso, irreflexivo, listo a estallar al menor motivo" (Díaz-Varcárcel, 1982: 59). The semantic content of this name hints at the violent termination of the relationship between Pedro and Dorita: Cartucho kills the latter in a misdirected revenge of Florita's death. An indication as to the ominous meaning of this nickname would enhance the target-text readers' understanding of the novel. Leeson, however, opted for simply importing the original name with no further clarification.

### 3.1.8. Other nicknames

Other nicknames that appear in *Tiempo de silencio* are "Mediodoble"<sup>84</sup> (Ts: 15), "el Guapo"<sup>85</sup> (Ts: 54...), and "el mago de la aguja" (Ts: 131), later shortened to "el mago"<sup>86</sup>. Leeson opted for a variety of strategies: he translated the first one communicatively ("Chief", TS: 10), copied the second one (TS: 44...), and translated the third literally ("the magician with the needle", TS: 107; later, "the magician"). The importance of these characters within the novel is very limited, but it could be argued that it is desirable to maintain a consistent strategy, whether their names are left in their original form, or translated.

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<sup>84</sup>Literally, "Halfdouble".

<sup>85</sup>Literally, "the handsome one".

<sup>86</sup>Literally, "the wizard/magician".

## 3.2. Names of places

### 3.2.1. Topographical names

The topography of Madrid is well defined in certain passages of *Tiempo de silencio*, despite the fact that it is never mentioned by name. A multitude of names of streets appear, sometimes repeatedly: “calle del Nuncio o de la Bola” (Ts: 17); “una bocacalle de Progreso” (Ts: 23); “calle de Atocha” and “altos de Antón Martín” (Ts: 31...); “Plazuela de Tirso de Molina” (Ts: 73); “calle de San Marcos” (Ts: 95), etc. As indicated earlier on (see p. 132), the names of the thoroughfares (“calle”, “bocacalle”, “plaza”, etc.) could be translated, so that the reader of the target text gets an indication of what the source text is talking about, whereas their denominations (“Nuncio”, “Bola”, etc.) remain in Spanish, so that the reference to the source culture is maintained and the text does not become “domesticated”. Alternatively, the whole name could be imported into the target text in Spanish, as Leeson did all through the novel<sup>87</sup>. The same policy could be applied in the case of the names of areas or topographical features, all those in Madrid (“el retiro”, Ts: 40; “el Rastro”, Ts: 50; “el viaducto” and “la Casa [de Campo]”, Ts: 121), its surroundings (“la sierra”, Ts: 30; “Tetuán de las Victorias”, Ts: 36; “el Monasterio [del Escorial]”, Ts: 294), and the rest of the Spanish territory (“La Mancha”, Ts: 246; “la Bureba”, Ts: 290).

The name of the German city Frankfurt-am-Main is hispanised, and it appears in *Tiempo de silencio* (Ts: 257) as “Frankfurt sobre el Mano”, which can be an ironic allusion to the dictatorial imposition of translating all foreign names (see p. 77). Leeson’s version reads “Frankfurt am Main” (TS: 213), which is the German name of the city. The loss of the irony seems, thus, unavoidable.

### 3.2.2. Names of pubs, clubs and other commercial establishments

The names of the drinking establishments that appear in *Tiempo de silencio* are not disclosed. They are referred to by the generic name of the establishment in question (“tasca”, Ts: 93; “taberna”, Ts: 128). The only possible exception is the denomination of “el palacio de Mor-A-Pio” (Ts: 71), whose meaning is explained in the chapter dealing with humour (see p. 168).

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<sup>87</sup> This was also the strategy followed by Moreno in *Campos de Londres* (see p. 132).

The names of the famous club “el Eslava” (Ts: 188) and of the theatre “el Monumental” (Ts: 191) may require an additional explanation in the target text as to the type of venue that it designates. However, the context (“un palco del Eslava”, “un palco del Monumental”) helps comprehend the references. The mention of “el Barceló” (Ts: 158), on the other hand, appears in a context which does not clarify its significance: “¡Como a traición y a cóncave del Barceló sin llamas te convoco!”. Leeson erroneously informs his readers in a footnote that “Barceló is the name of one of the most notorious cheap dance halls of Madrid” (TS: 129). The Barceló was, in fact, the theatre where Ortega gave the lecture which is parodied in *Tiempo de silencio* (see Ts: 163).

The names of two commercial firms appear in *Tiempo de silencio*. First, we find “el Ocaso” (Ts: 190). This insurance company’s most popular service is that of dignified funeral and burial ceremonies. The nature of this firm, if not the meaning of its denomination, is clear from the text (“un honesto enterramiento de tercera especial con tumba propia mediante el cuidadoso pago de las cuotas del Ocaso”). Therefore, the name’s staying as such in the target text is not detrimental to the understanding of the text. Leeson, in this case, opted for a translation by definition: “a final resting place in the third storey of a private grave<sup>88</sup>, paid for by regular subscriptions to the insurance company”. Thus, the cultural reference is lost, but the target text gains in comprehensibility for its readers.

Secondly, there appears the English name “la Standard” (Ts: 275). Once again, it is clear from the source text that this is an electrical company (“los electricistas de la Standard”), and, in consequence, no modifications would be required in the target text. Leeson translated the passage as “employees of Standard Electric” (TS: 230), providing the full name of the company, presumably in order to make the reference accessible to his readers.

#### 4. Summary

The translation of proper names may pose difficulties for three reasons:

a. Because of their actual meaning.

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<sup>88</sup> Leeson seems to have misunderstood the meaning of “de tercera”.



b. Because of their links with the plot (i.e. because their meaning has a thematic relevance).

c. Because of their connotations (i.e. because of their links with a cultural context).

*London Fields* is, by far, the more problematic of the two texts studied here as far as the translation of proper names is concerned, both for qualitative and quantitative reasons. Qualitatively, the proper names that appear in the text bear a closer relation to its content than the ones that appear in *Tiempo de silencio* bear to the matter of this novel. Quantitatively, the number of proper names included in *London Fields* is much vaster than that of the ones included in *Tiempo de silencio*.

It follows from what has been expounded above that proper names may affect the comprehensibility of the target text when at least one of two circumstances affects them:

a. When their meaning is relevant in any way to the development of the plot, and the omission of such information (and the readers of the target text would be denied access to this information if some form of explanation were not included in the text) is detrimental to a good understanding of the meaning of the story.

b. When there are explicit allusions to their meaning in the text. In this case, it would be incongruous to translate these allusions and leave the reader of the target text in the dark as to what they refer to.

However, translation does not necessarily imply literalness. There are several procedures that the translator can resort to when confronted with problems related to these kinds of words. The meaning of the names of the characters that have a thematical link, such as "Guy" or "Nicola" in *London Fields*, can be clarified by means of compensation. It is precisely their prominence in the text that offers the translator chances of "explaining" the connotations of such names when need be.

Indiscriminate translation of the proper names that emerge from a text, even if it were practicable, would have a pernicious consequence: the source text would be perceived as a national product by the readers of the target text, since its referents lie within their own culture. If they are accompanied by a generic term that defines their kind (words

like “street”, “pub”, “company”, etc.), this generic term could be translated, in order to facilitate the understanding of the meanings contained in the source text to the target-text readership, whereas the proper names themselves could remain unchanged.

In relation to this, it is worth mentioning that the literal translation of proper names which appear sporadically in the source text, such as those of restaurants in *London Fields*, is a less problematic solution than the translation of, for instance, the names of the main characters, which recur throughout the novel. The role of the former is anecdotal. Thus, alienating them from their own cultural context would have less noticeable repercussions than the extraction of the latter from the same source culture. This may seem, however, paradoxical, since the importance of the former within the source text is much less than that of the latter. Once again, the decision has to be made between a domesticating translation (more easily understandable) and one that fully respects the identity of the original (less transgressive but, perhaps, more obscure).

Inevitably, there will be losses in the target text. These losses will arise from the impossibility of conveying word-play (as in the case of “Faith” and “Hope”, but no “Charity”, or “Broadener” in *London Fields*) or from a cultural gap (for instance, the names of restaurants and other establishments in *London Fields*). One way in which these can be remedied is by means of the inclusion of footnotes, or an explanatory appendix to the book. The pertinence of such a procedure has to be left to the discretion of the translator and, ultimately, of the publishers of the target text.

## Chapter 5: Humour

[...] if you are a comic writer, which I mainly am--the best way of dealing with the crook, the villain, with the swine is to laugh at him. (Martin Amis; *International Herald Tribune*, 22 January, 1990)

### 1. Introduction

Although the ability to appreciate humour characterises the whole of the human race, the concept of humour itself, and that of what is and what is not considered to be comic present huge variations throughout different human groups, and even within each one of them, which can be attributed to a number of factors.

Firstly, it is important to remember that each individual has his or her own particular sense of humour, which serves to relate him or her to some people, and, at the same time, to differentiate him or her from other individuals. Secondly, it seems adequate to think that this sense of humour is conditioned by a series of circumstances which transcend a possible genetic transmission. The living environment plays a very important role in the configuration of a person's characteristic sense of humour, and cultural factors appear to have a fundamental importance in this respect. Hervey *et al.* claim that humour "is a highly culture-bound phenomenon, which means that even the genuine cross-cultural equivalence of laughter is questionable" (1995: 15). It seems clear that different cultures have different perceptions of humour:

Adults from different cultures often fail to appreciate each other's humour, because they don't have the same picture of the world and so do not find the same thing incongruous. This is why a joke is often not funny when it is translated into another language. What Wittgenstein said about language-games--that to share a language-game is to share a form of life--applies nicely to humour. To share humour with someone we need to share a form of life with him. (ibid.: 61)

There seems to be an implicit categorisation of the features that characterise the humour considered to be representative of a certain nation or cultural frame. Thus, we can hear expressions like "British humour", "Spanish humour", "Yiddish jokes", or "Germans don't have a sense of humour". Nevertheless, it is worth keeping in mind that any such classification is necessarily the result of an overgeneralisation, since we can find many variations within each "category", variations that may depend on individual

idiosyncrasies, and also on fashions, trends or other forms of external pressure, such as the ones promoted by the media.

It is difficult to determine whether the sense of humour that characterises the individuals who belong to the same cultural context is conditioned by this context, or whether, conversely, it is the sum of the coincidental features in the sense of humour of each individual that creates a “geographically-defined” humour. From a synchronic perspective, this question is immaterial, due to the fact that the interaction of the individuals and their cultural milieu works both ways simultaneously.

We could establish a very basic distinction between two fundamental kinds of humour: **linguistic** and **situational**. The first one responds to intellectual stimuli expressed by means of the language; the second, to visual or auditive stimuli, which can be concrete (the perception of an actual situation or image) or abstract (the mental representations of a situation or an image). The first type relies on a playful use of language, which can manifest itself through multiple linguistic devices. Walter Nash (1985: 137-47) established a taxonomy of these devices, dividing them in *homophones, homophonic phrases, mimes, mimetic phrases, homonyms, homonymic phrases, pseudomorphs, contacts and blends, portmanteaux, etymological puns, bilingual puns* and *pun metaphors*. The basis for the second type of humour are all those elements that constitute what is known as *slapstick comedy*, such as skids, stumbles, falls, bumps, knock-downs, mix-ups, and other instances of misfortune (the misfortune of others, most of the time), as well as elements that provoke laughter in virtue of their bizarre, nonsensical, incongruous, or absurd nature (gestures, stances, strange combinations of things and/or people), that is, humour without words.

Humour reaches its most enduring form in literature. For obvious reasons, linguistic humour is the main instrument in this field, although episodes of situational humour may also be described. In the light of what has been said above, it would seem logical to expect different comic components and humoristic devices in *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*. The two novels, however, share a reflective, pessimistic approach to humour. McElroy's words (1989: 185) can be applied to both of them: “As for the twentieth-century man, a sense of powerlessness in the world without, a fear of collapse of the psyche within, the premonition that the present culture, the only home afforded to him, has already embarked irreversibly on the path to some hideous or merely ludicrous demise--these are the spawning grounds of his monsters.”

Both Martin Amis and Martín-Santos use humour to distort reality, and to exaggerate the grotesque in everyday life. The style of their prose befits their goals in all its convoluted self-consciousness. Morreall (1983: 96) claims that "Humorous writing [...] is writing that can shift perspective, even to the most unusual points of view". Attention must be paid "to the role of each word and phrase used, to all their connotations, and to the tone they establish." (ibid.). The implications that this has for the translation of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* will be analysed in the sections below.

## 2. *London Fields*

Prior to the presentation of specific examples extracted from *London Fields*, it seems pertinent to include a brief introduction to the specific characteristics of humour as found in postmodern fiction.

Jerry Aline Flieger, in a study on postmodern textual humour, argues that the comic modality of a text can be perceived at four different levels, if not more:

As a technique of the writing itself; As a theme or source of subject matter; As a metaphor/paradigm for the literary process in its entirety; As a performing metaphor for the working of the human psyche, in an ongoing social exchange. (1991: 235)

Flieger considers that there is a comic element intrinsic to post-modern fiction, which is found in "the bizarre symptoms surrounding the contemporary text" (ibid.: 3). In consequence, she does not merely analyse the textual manifestations of the linguistic and situational types of humour mentioned in the paragraph above: she also establishes a relationship between text and literature, on the one hand, and between text and society, on the other, as a further expression of the comic quality of a text.

According to this theory, the analysis of humour in the post-modern text must be carried out on a double axis, established by the coordinates drawn by its literary features, and by the vision of the world and the ideological principles which emerge from it. Flieger's words quoted below are illuminating:

Is the unworked comic text simply a matter of modality, related to its self-referential quality and its ironic and critical vision, its



refusal to take itself absolutely seriously? Or does this text perhaps represent a philosophical strategy, a way of coping with a frightening vision, undoing some anxiety of the post-modern condition (As Ionesco puts it: "We laugh in order not to cry" [*Notes et contre-notes*, 175].) Or is the comic nature of the post-modern text a more local phenomenon, residing in specific instances of comic material (...)? In other words, should the post-modern comic be analysed as a literary mode/technique? Or should it be considered a philosophical symptom of what Lyotard has called "the post-modern condition"? Or ought it to be analysed as a philosophical tactic for eroding traditional metaphysics from within? (ibid.: 8-9)

The alternatives exposed in this passage do not exclude one another. Any given text may use humour as a thematic prop, or a mode of self-reference. In order to serve such purposes, it may use specific devices, which can appear in various degrees of isolation, and, at the same time, it can exploit its own comic quality as a weapon, offensive or defensive, with which the author confronts his or her inner and outer circumstances. Perhaps the most radical form of humour, according to what has just been said, is one that manipulates language in an attempt to break established codes (puns and other graphic and phonologic devices imply a breach in the norm), one that uses language as an instrument to describe and, at the same time, judge or criticise reality. Humour in post-modern fiction shows a great degree of intellectuality. In it, form and content are indissolubly linked, the former being a reflection and magnification of the latter.

Walter Nash underlines the differences between the usage of language to achieve a comic goal and other forms of usage. He describes them in terms of the manipulation of the linguistic matter: "Like any other variety of usage, the language of humour has to draw on the patterns and implications of phonology and graphology, of syntactic structure, of lexical form, of semantic field" (1985: 12). English is a language that favours the breach in the norm that has been mentioned above. Its richness in monosyllables makes homonymy and quasi-homonymy, both essential components of puns, a frequent occurrence. "Its grammar", as Hervey and Higgins observe, "is a potential source of ambiguities" (1992: 25). It is possible that this intrinsic quality of the language has encouraged a form of typically British humour, based on multisemanticity and phonetic similarities of a given number of terms in each case, and the confusion that occurs as a result. The natives of English-speaking countries would be, therefore, predisposed to understand and appreciate this sort of comic quality.

John R. Clark states:

There can be no doubt that, in our era, the themes and modes of our own comic literature (and our other literature as well) are usually no laughing matter. The subjects are frightful and ugly, the methods of presentation disruptive [...]. Great literature must flower as best it can, choosing whatever myths and means it can best nurture and develop. (1991: Preface)

*London Fields* is a typical example of the kind of modern literature to which Clark is alluding here: its subject matter borders on the tragic (death, defeat, worthlessness, despair), and yet it remains a comic book. The stylistic treatment of the content of this novel provides the contrast that is necessary to shock the reader and breach the norm. The incongruity that thus arises, and the imbalance between the content and its presentation explain the comic effect.

Throughout Part II of *The Modern Satiric Grotesque and Its Traditions* (1991), Clark enumerates the methods available to a literary author in order to shock his readers by confounding normative expectations. These are:

- a. Degrading the hero.
- b. Debunking the author.
- c. Dislocating the language.
- d. Gaming with the plot.
- e. Further intrusion and obstruction (abrupt alterations, scorn of the fictionality of fiction, authorial intrusion *in propria persona*, etc.).
- f. Discordant endings.
- g. Infernal repetition.

Had it not been for the fact that *London Fields* was written several years before the publication of Clark's work, it would seem that Martin Amis was systematically following the points in this list, one by one, when drafting his novel. Since this possibility has to be ruled out, for obvious reasons, we will have to accept that *London Fields* is inserted in a satirical literary tradition that appears to be widely spread across the Western world. The conformity of the authors who write in this fashion (W. Burroughs, R. Brautigan, Robbe-Grillet, I. Calvino, V. Nabokov, J. L. Borges, G. García Márquez, K. Vonnegut, to name but a few) suggests that certain common features endure across the cultures, and, therefore, that satire, which is, after all, a primarily comic modality, can be understood and appreciated by readers belonging to different cultural frames.

However, this coincidence does not imply that translation is an easy process when a comic text is involved. As well as cultural factors, there are also linguistic factors to be considered. Although Mahadeu L. Apte maintains "The techniques used in humor are universal" (1985: 178), it would seem that each individual occurrence remains unique, and its transference to a different language is usually a complicated process. In the specific case of *London Fields*, the all-pervading presence of comic twists and devices poses difficulties for the translator, although, at the same time it facilitates the appreciation of the novel's type of humour in a language in which it was not conceived. It poses difficulties, because the enormous stock of comical resources finds its reflection in the huge number of problems that arise when those are to be reproduced in the target text. And yet, it facilitates the understanding of a characteristically British form of humour, which is, therefore, alien to the target culture, in so far as the multitude of devices makes these perceived as a fundamental component of the novel, and it predisposes the reader to welcome them as a comic element.

The humour in *London Fields* can be interpreted according to the four levels that Flieger mentioned in relation to the post-modern text (see above, pp. 150-51). However, this study will concentrate on the first two, since comic quality as an allegory or paradigm of the whole literary process, or as a metaphor for human mental processes are not relevant, *per se*, as far as translation is concerned. Such interpretations are largely dependent on the judgement of the individual readers and, consequently, there is little that the translator can do in this respect, other than to transmit that comic quality from the source text into the target text, so that it can be interpreted in its appropriate dimension.

Thus, the two other levels, which present translatability problems by virtue of their immediacy, will be the ones dealt with here. Humour as a narrative technique seems to be the category that will pose the most difficulties. Humour as a subject matter also has to be carefully considered in the process of translation, on account of its cultural bonds (some communities may find certain things funny, which other communities will not find amusing at all). When dealing with two West European languages, however, these cultural considerations do not play too important a role in translation, since there is a certain coincidence in what is considered comic throughout the continent. Of course, many variations can be observed within the European context, but, nevertheless, a minimal process of adaptation is generally enough to guarantee that

humour can be transported from one culture into another with a reasonable degree of success.

According to Marla Levy: "Amis writes humorously about the sorry state of the human condition. He has a curious way of extracting laughs at the expense of human baseness and poverty; even the pathetic appears funny when he describes it. He writes about the breakdown in communication between people and their brutality to each other" (in Halio, 1983: 29). This type of humour, traditionally labelled as "black", works exceedingly well within the thematic frame of this author's novels, and *London Fields* is no exception.

Martin Amis considers himself an essentially comic writer. Many of the narrative elements of *London Fields* have a comic function: the names of some of the characters and venues, certain literary allusions, examples of linguistic variations or idiosyncrasies, etc. As well as all these, and very frequently associated to them, we also find more conventional instances of humour, such as jokes and puns.

Irony and sarcasm are also very much present in *London Fields*, as in the mention of "the man at Greenpeace, in whom the name Enola Gay had briefly rung a bell" (LF: 146). The name of the plane that dropped the first atomic bomb on an inhabited area should have a more powerful effect on a member of the most famous environmental organisation on Earth than that of briefly ringing a bell in him, hence the sarcasm. But maybe this kind of humour is best represented in what Martin Amis characterises as "Britishness": a ridiculous obsession with the class system, imperialistic dreams... He employs typically local weapons to satirise his own country: "Amis uses the traditional English comic tools of class, digestive functions and general social discomfiture" (Mary Blume, *International Herald Tribune*, 22 January, 1990). A further element could be added to this enumeration: sex. Its presence is all-pervading and, more often than not, it serves the comic purposes of the novel. Martin Amis not only mourns "the death of love" in *London Fields*--he also ridicules what has remained as a sad parody of love: Keith's promiscuity and lewdness, Nicola's passionless nymphomania, Guy's sublimated instincts.

The purpose of some of these comic features is to provoke laughter. Others are, however, a more subtle form of humour, yet another instance of the author's winking at his accomplice-reader. Martin Amis confessed himself loath to draw a very distinct line between comic and non-comic novels: "the comic novel isn't so easily separable



from any other kind of novel, the genres will break down a little, it seems to me” (*International Herald Tribune*, 22 January, 1990). This might be the reason why the humour in *London Fields* cannot be separated from the plot, the narrative techniques, the presentation of the characters, the stylistic twists.

Peter Newmark wrote: “The translation of puns is of marginal importance and of irresistible interest” (1988: 217). In *London Fields*, however, the all-pervading presence of puns challenges the veracity of the first part of his assertion. The translation of the puns in *London Fields* cannot be of marginal importance, since their presence in this novel is far from marginal, for two reasons: because puns represent a substantial part of the text, and, also, because in most occasions they are so closely linked to the plot that it is extremely difficult to dissociate them from it. As Boyd Tonkin remarked, “Its [*London Fields*’s] jokes and ruses are more deeply buried, more closely entwined with the rhythms of the plot. He [Martin Amis] insists that the “pleasure principle” still governs his fiction, with comedy always in the driving-seat.” (*City Limits*, 21-28 September, 1989). The fact that the role of puns goes beyond a simple form of linguistic humour and they contain an element of subversion is corroborated by Nash (1985: 147-48), who claims that this type of word-play represents a form of code-breaking in humour.

Certain puns in *London Fields* are easily translatable into Spanish, thanks to some fortunate coincidence between the two languages. This is the case of the term “Nuclear” (LF: 125), which Nicola uses to describe the Clinch family: “ ‘My wife Hope and I have been married for fifteen years.’ ‘Nuclear,’ said Nicola [...]”. In Spanish too, the adjective “nuclear” may refer to both a family unit and the energy obtained by splitting the atom, and the threat of nuclear power is very much present throughout *London Fields*.

This is also the case of the excerpt from a conversation between Nicola and Keith quoted below:

‘...I’m quite “non-judgmental”.

Keith liked this word. To him it evoked a new dawn, a better world, one finally free of all juries and magistrates and QCs.  
(LF: 295)

Moreno’s translated the passage as: “yo... yo no ‘juzgo’.” “A Keith le gustó aquella palabra.” (CL: 361). This rendition could be misleading, in that what Keith liked was not the work itself, but the absence of a judgement. In the target text the problem could



be solved by using a paraphrase, such as “No me gusta juzgar a la gente”, or even “Estoy en contra de que se juzgue a la gente”, followed by “A Keith le gustó aquello”. This would allow the reader to follow Keith’s train of thought: the petty criminal, in the light of his own experience, interprets this expression in a sense that it does not originally have.

But most puns pose translatability problems, which are sometimes aggravated by considerations that are extrinsic to the expression itself, as the two examples below, in which the respective puns are identified as such within the text, seem to prove.

During his sojourn in Venice, Guy improvises a little poem, inspired by the sun and the clouds: “The sun, the sun, the... daubing sun:/ The clouds are *putti* in its hands” (LF: 30). The expression “to be putty in somebody’s hands” is a cliché in English. “Putti”, a homophone of “putty”, is the Italian term used in art to describe cherubs. Soon after reciting those lines, Guy reflects, “Dreadful pun, I suppose” (ibid.). It is fairly easy to visualise in one’s mind the effect of the sun’s rays on the clouds, which resemble chubby little angels, or *putti*, but this episode cannot be satisfactorily translated into Spanish, because this language lacks the other component (the cliché) of the pun. On a later occasion (LF: 148), Guy muses on his son, whom he sees as a “heavenly body”, a “sun”: “(oh these puns and their shameful mediocrity--but I meant it, I really meant it): I’ve got, I now have... I now have a little sun.”

In the first of the two cases quoted above, the translator is confronted with the impossibility of reproducing the English pun in Spanish, and, therefore, has to choose between **a)** to substitute a pun that worked as such in Spanish and was adequate to the context for the original one, which could prove very difficult; or **b)** to translate the couplet and suppress or modify the mention of the “pun”. This is the solution Moreno opted for in the published translation of *London Fields*: “El sol, el sol, la... solar coloración:/las nubes son ángeles en su blasón. [...] -Un horrible pareado, supongo [...]” (CL: 47).

In the second case, however, the most appropriate solution seem to be the modification of the pun, since “sol” (“sun”) is an affective form of address quite common in Spanish, especially when referred to children. Moreno uses this term: “Ahora tengo un pequeño sol, un solete.” (CL: 186). The explicit connection between “sun” and “son” would disappear, but this can be considered as a minor loss.

However, puns usually appear in *London Fields* without a label attached, i.e. they are not identified as such in the text, and only pose translatability difficulties due to their linguistic nature. These difficulties are, therefore, of an intrinsic kind. As mentioned above, puns can fall within a number of different categories, depending on the linguistic devices they rely upon. The existing differences between source language and target language make the coincidence of homophones or homonyms, onomatopoeias, etc. very rare and, often, purely accidental. In consequence, the puns below are untranslatable as such, and must be either compensated or suppressed, according to whichever the translator considers more opportune in each case. These are puns based on:

- **English proverbs, clichés or aphorisms** which do not have an equivalent in the Spanish language: “in the pink or the blue of boyish good health” (LF: 31). Moreno opted for suppressing the pun in the target text, and rendered the passage as “rebosando salud infantil” (CL: 47).
- **A foreign language.** Guy’s brief poem about the sun and the clouds (see above) is an example of this variety. What renders this pun untranslatable is not bilingualism itself, but the existence of two homophones (or quasi-homophones), “putty” and “putti”, which belong to two different languages. Nevertheless, not all bilingual puns are built on this type of coincidental feature. An example of this would be the expression “esprit de l’escalier” (“Keith was in fact sustaining a mild attack of *esprit de l’escalier*”, LF: 300), which could remain in French in the target text (CL: 367). The comic effect of this sentence (the veiled allusion to Keith’s sexual arousal) works identically in English and in Spanish, since it relies on the readers’ understanding of the double meaning bestowed upon an expression which belongs neither to the source nor the target language.
- **Compounds** whose translation is different to that of the sum of their parts: “windcheater” rounded up by the comment: “even the wind Keith cheated” (LF: 180). Moreno rendered the passage as: “Se puso la cazadora (Keith también estafaba al viento)” (LF: 226) and inserted a footnote to clarify the literal meaning of “windcheater”.

“smoking-jacket” (LF: 403). Keith uses his wearing a jacket as an excuse to smoke where he has not been allowed to. Moreno suppressed the pun in this instance:

“Ese batín te sienta fenomenalmente, Keith. Pareces majestuoso dentro de él.”  
“¡Sí, je, je!” (CL: 490).

“painkillers/there was only one woman who could kill his pain” (LF: 430). The strategy chosen by Moreno was literal (rather than idiomatic, i.e. “analgésicos”) translation, in order to preserve the play on words: “Guy tiró sus matadolores [...], sólo había una mujer que podía matar realmente su dolor.” (CL: 522).

“man-made in every sense, made by men with men in mind.” (LF: 457), which Moreno compensated by explaining, within the target text, the meaning of the expression “man-made” (“artificial”): “hecho por las [sic] mano del hombr en todos los sentidos, hecho pensando en los hombres” (CL: 555).

- **Homonyms**<sup>89</sup>:

“Here was a room, here was a set that had experienced a lot of nakedness, a lot of secretions and ablutions and reflections” (LF: 73). The play is here on “reflections” as “twin images”, and also as “thoughts”. Moreno translated the term as “reflexiones” (CL: 97), thus rejecting a more natural collocation (“reflejos”).

“You wouldn’t call it writer’s block. You might call it snooper’s block. Tower block.” (LF: 99). Due to the lack of a similarly polysemic term in Spanish, the published translation reads: “No se le puede llamar bloqueo de escritor; se le debería llamar más bien bloqueo de fisgón. El bloque de pisos.” (CL: 128).

- Closely related to the previous point, is the category of those terms whose meaning varies with linguistic **register**:

“Could be”. Grinder, he thought. Here we go. Grind her. A good-

She offered him a screwdriver and looked on with interest. “I can’t do it. The screw’s too tight.”

Screw, thought Keith. Too tight. Yeah. He was surprised, again, to find no joke, no icebreaking salacity, on his slowly smiling lips. Hang about: it’s coming. Too tight. Screw. If it’s...you can’t have a...

He applied the tool with will. The blade ground into the scratched head--and skidded off into the moon of Keith’s thumb.

“Fuck,” he said, and dropped everything.

(LF: 58)

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<sup>89</sup> The puns about the name “Guy” (see pp. 127-28) also fall into this category.

What would appear to be a scene of domestic repairs, if interpreted according to the electricians' jargon, is here transformed, by virtue of the double variations in meaning of the terms used, into an allegory of Keith's sexual fantasies. Moreno translated this passage freely. He substituted morphological and phonological features (suffixes and rhyme) for the original homonyms, and simplified the passage, in order to maintain the sexual theme in the target text:

Podría ser – dijo Keith mientras pensaba deprisa. Moler, molienda, joder, jodienda. la molienda y la jodienda no tienen enmienda. Je, je.  
Nicola le ofreció un destornillador y miró con interés:  
O tal vez la acumulación de polvillo en la parte del motor.  
Polvillo, polvete, polvo, polvazo, je, je. Cómo lo sabes, chata. De la manera que a ti más te guste.  
Quitó los tornillos e introdujo la mano. La afilada cuchilla se ensañó con la yema de su pulgar.  
Me cago en la leche jodida – exclamó, dejando todo tirado.

(CL: 80)

Later on in the novel, Keith shows off his wit by giving a title to a pornographic video of the sadomasochistic variety, made by Nicola. As a homage to the films he is so keen on watching, he proposes:

“Uh. Hang about. ‘Bobby...’ Uh. Wait. ‘Bobby...’ It’s coming.  
‘Bobby...on the Beat.’ There you are. ‘Bobby on the Beat’.”  
“Very good, Keith.”  
“Or just ‘Tithead’.”  
“‘Tithead’, Keith?”  
“It’s what you call them. The hat.”  
[...] “Filth”, he thought. Yeah. Would have been best. Just call it  
“Filth”.

(LF: 299-300)

“Bobby on the beat” is a perfectly innocent expression if interpreted in its habitual context, “a policeman doing his round”. In this particular context, it acquires a second meaning, based on the primary one of the verb “to beat”, to strike with violent blows. His second suggestion is based on a relatively recent word formation device (noun + “head”), to denote a person who is obsessed with or a frequent user of something. The third one plays with the meaning of “filth” as “rubbish” and as a slang term to refer to the police. If these expressions were translated literally into Spanish (Moreno's chosen strategy: “Un poli haciendo la ronda”, “Cabeza de teta”, and “Un madero”, respectively [CL: 367]), they would be lacking in the double meaning that provides the comic effect in the source text.

If need be, the original double meaning can be changed into innuendo in the translation (an expression like “La porra del policía” would convey the sexual insinuation of the source text<sup>90</sup>). In the case of the second term, “Tithead”, an unrelated expression could be included in the target text, since hats with that shape are not used by the Spanish police.

- Not only is Keith obsessed with sex, but he also boasts a sexist attitude, which shines through his choice of vocabulary. The following example proves how, although the description of real events he makes may be casually accurate, his perception of those events is deformed by his obscene mentality:

Birds played in the pool. “Like...” Keith grinned fondly. “It’s like birds playing in a pool.”  
 “*Like* birds playing in a pool, Keith?”  
 “You know. Girls. Playing in a swimming pool.”  
 (LF: 128)

Moreno translated the passage literally, and included a footnote in which he explains the double meaning of the terms “bird” and “pool” (CL: 162).

- Martin Amis also exploits every now and then the sexual **connotations** present in certain words: “Well *he told me to read the nipple gadget on the stopcock*” (LF: 319), explains Nicola to a bewitched Guy, who is unable to interpret her words in their less-than-innocent sense. A “stopcock” is a valve, and a “nipple gadget” can be a conical projection in such a device, but the author relies on the slang meaning of “cock” and the primary meaning of nipple to create his word-play. Moreno’s translation does not reveal Nicola’s malicious intentions: “Bueno, me dijo que mirara el chisme de la llave de cierre.” (CL: 390).
- **Homophones:** the case of “son” and “sun”, mentioned above.
- **Quasi-homophones**<sup>91</sup>:  
 “ ‘Audi.’ Guy thought for a moment and said, ‘Howdy.’ ‘Saab Turbo,’ Keith went on.” (LF: 224). The comic effect of the quasi-homophones “Audi” and “Howdy” is missing from Moreno’s translation, in which they both appear as a colloquial greeting: “- Quehay. Guy permaneció unos instantes pensativo y

<sup>90</sup>However, the sadomasochistic connotations would be missing from the target text.

<sup>91</sup>The numerous puns around Nicola Six’s surname and the word “sex” also belong to this category (see pp. 130-31).



contestó: - Qué hay. – Turbo Saab –prosiguió Keith” (CL: 279). Also, one of the most distinctive features of Keith’s speech, derived from his obsession with luxury commodities, is missing from the Spanish version.

“He sat down and began on his Boeuf Stroganoff [...] ‘You got your *boeuf* statificate on you?’ ‘Got my what?’ asked Kath cautiously. Could it be that Keith was now complaining about her cooking, [...]? [...] ‘The bit of paper that says how old you are’.” (LF: 315). In this case too the pun is missing from the published translation, which may provoke confusion in the target-text readers: “Se sentó y atacó su Boeuf Stroganoff [...] -¿Tienes el certificado de conocimiento? -¿Qué si tengo el qué? – preguntó Kath con cautela. ¿Se estaba acaso quejando Keith ahora de sus comidas [...]? [...] -El pedazo de papel que dice los años que tienes.” (CL: 385).

- **Synonymy**, or the possibility of expressing the same concept with two different terms. This is the case of nil or zero points in the game of tennis, which in English is indicated as “love” (“nada” is the term used in Spanish). The implicit equation (love is nothing, nothing is love) gives the author an excuse to reflect upon one of the main thematic lines of the novel: the death of love (“Even on the tennis court love has gone; even on the tennis court love has been replaced by nothing”, LF: 184)<sup>92</sup>. The pun was translated literally by Moreno, who also included an explanatory footnote (CL: 231).

- **Onomatopoeias:**

“ ‘Cock-a-doodle-do’, Guy decided, was one of the world’s greatest euphemisms.” (LF: 32), in a reference to the unbearable rattle of the cock, to which the more gentle sound of the onomatopoeia does not make justice. In Spanish, however, the onomatopoeia (“quiquiriquí”, CL: 49) is far more resounding, and, as a result, Moreno’s literal translation seems too abstruse.

Along the same lines, we find the reproduction of the sounds of a fruit machine, which appear interpolated in the speech of a Keith so engrossed in the game that he is singing along while he talks to Guy: “To look at the boiler.

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<sup>92</sup>This kind of reference might not seem humorous, since laughter is not intended. However, we consider its inclusion in this section justified, for it appeals to a sense of irony (which is, in itself, a mode of humour) in the accomplice-reader. As Galligan says, “laughter is a test neither for nor of comedy” (1984: 3).

Puckapuckapuckapucka. Bah ber dee birdle dee bom ploom. A, an exceptional woman, that.” (LF: 308). These sounds can also be interpreted, in some cases, as onomatopoeias, which underline the meaning of Keith’s words: “ber dee birdle” sounds like *birdie* or *bird*, derogatory terms with which Keith frequently alludes to women. In Moreno’s translation the meaning of these sounds was ignored, in favour of the reproduction of onomatopoeas more common in the Spanish language: “Para echar un vistazo al calentador. Tírurirurírurirurá. Parabáchimpúm” (CL: 377). The formal gain thus becomes a semantic loss.

“Oh, Lizzyboohooohoo” (LF: 369), which prolongs the name of the character into pretended sobbing, incomprehensible in Spanish (“Oh. Lizzyboohooohoo.”, CL: 450).

- **Blends:** “Nobodaddy” (“nobody” and “Daddy”, LF: 148 and 284), term used to make reference to God. Neither of Moreno’s translations, “Padredenadie” (CL: 186) and “ningún Papaíto” (CL: 348), respectively, echoes the source-text meaning.
- **Acronyms** and the meaning of the “words” they form: “ ‘So your father was working for *her*’. ‘Her? Pardon me?’ ‘HER. High Explosives Research.’ ” (LF: 161). This pun’s dependence on the spoken form of language forces the author to suppress the acronymic form in the first appearance of *her* and to disguise it in the second (HER, rather than a spelling of each letter). A way of compensating the pun in the target text would consist of the utilisation of a literal translation of “her” (“ella”), transformed into an acronym appropriate to the semantic context of this passage, for instance: “ELLA. Explosives Limited Los Angeles” (CL: 202).

Sometimes, Martin Amis plays with language, on the phonetic, lexical and semantic levels, without necessarily producing a pun. The transcription of the dictionary entries for the word “toilet” illustrates this kind of proceeding:

Now the real toilet--beginning with the toilet. The toilet: rightly so called. Interesting word, toilet. ‘Toilet.’ *Toilet*. ‘Arranging the hair...(make one’s toilet)...an elaborate toilet; a toilet of white satin...(room containing lavatory)... (Med.) cleansing of part after an operation or at time of childbirth... The reception of visitors by a lady during the concluding stages of her toilet; very fashionable in the 18th century... Preparation for execution (in Fr. form *toilette*).’  
(LF: 194)

The translation problem arises here from the fact that such polysemy does not occur in Spanish. Possibly for that reason, Moreno arranged the translation of the passage around the French term: “la toilette” (CL: 242). This version, however, flounders when the pun refers to Nicola going to the toilet, which Moreno rendered as “[ir] a la toilette”, an expression with an altogether different meaning.

The linguistic varieties that appear in *London Fields* are an endless source of comic effects, as has been seen in the previous chapter: Keith Talent’s singular speech, the idiosyncrasies of the cockney dialect, the peculiarities of Janit Slotnick’s mode of expression, the tabloids jargon, the opportune interventions of Kim Talent and Marmaduke Clinch, and Incarnacion’s defective English illustrate the extension of parody, irony, sarcasm, or, to put it shortly, *the comic* to all the narrative spheres of this novel.

The reproduction in the target text of every single one of the examples mentioned above will depend on its specific features. Given the characteristics of *London Fields*, the preservation of as many puns and plays on words as possible seems to be the most appropriate solution. Those which turn out to be untranslatable as such could be compensated in one way or another. If the translator introduces puns of his/her own creation in the target text, many factors must be considered: the chosen device should be appropriate to the passage’s tone, be semantically pertinent and accord with the kind of humour that characterises the novel (see, for instance, CL: 80, mentioned above).

But comedy in *London Fields* goes beyond purely linguistic matters. A great deal of situational humour also appears in the novel: Lady Barnaby, lost in Yugoslavia without her glasses, who returns to her native England only to die in a concatenation of domestic mishaps; the savage attacks to which Marmaduke submits his father; Guy’s multiple lesions at the hands of Nicola; Keith’s pose and attire... are some examples of this type of humour. Martin Amis’ enthusiasm for the description of the grotesque, the repulsive and the incongruous from a comic perspective made R.Z. Sheppard describe him as an author endowed with “a Rabelaisian comic gift” (in *Contemporary Authors*, 1988: 22). The only difficulties that this type of humour may pose are those derived from the phonetic, lexical, semantic or grammatical structure of the passage in question, since the description of humorous passages can be effected

successfully in either language by using register, vocabulary and rhetoric devices to suit such scenes.

The importance of humour both as a theme and as narrative technique in *London Fields* is unquestionable. The former aspect (humour as a theme) does not pose, in itself, serious translatability problems: the source culture and the target culture are close enough for the perception of the comic not to be altered by translation. The second aspect (humour as narrative technique), however, presents numerous difficulties, in so far as the differences between source language and target language gain prominence in a self-conscious use of language, which is required in order to achieve the novel's goal: to move to laughter, and, if possible, to reflection through laughter.

George Orwell once observed: "A thing is funny when--in some way that is not actually offensive or frightening--it upsets the established order" (1970: 325). In the light of this assertion, *London Fields* may not be considered a funny book: its explicitness can be considered offensive, and some of its topics (nuclear threat, the death of love, the disintegration of modern societies, the futility of human relationships) can be quite frightening. On the other hand, one may think that "the humorous story is held to depend mainly on the **manner** of telling rather than the content, and its narration is a work of art" (Swabey, 1961: 90). If that is the case, in *London Fields* there is more than enough stylistic self-consciousness to justify its inclusion in the comic genre.

According to J. Morreall:

Humorous writing [...] is writing that can shift perspective, even to the more unusual points of view [...] [It] must pay attention to the role of each word and phrase used, to all their connotations, and to the tone they establish.[...] Humorous writing, in short, is careful, versatile, imaginative writing. (1983: 96)

These words apply nicely to a novel like *London Fields*, in which the attention to detail is constant, every sentence has been thought over many times until it met the stylistic requirements of the author, and even the apparently insignificant has been subjected to minute consideration. The ubiquitous comical elements in *London Fields* are an advantage and a disadvantage at the same time, from a translator's point of view. Because of the differences between English and Spanish, it is extremely difficult to reproduce in the latter the way in which Martin Amis constantly manipulates language.

And yet, the translator's capacity as re-creator of the text is enhanced and favoured: inventiveness can be given full rein, since it is an essential element for the reproduction or compensation of the original effects.

### 3. *Tiempo de silencio*

The humour in *Tiempo de silencio* relies heavily on the gap existing between the formal expression of the content and the content itself. A sarcastic form of humour arises from that gap, and pervades the whole work. The constant allusions (often ironical) to the consequences of the political situation ("la dieta monótona", Ts: 8; "En guerra comíamos las ratas", Ts: 9), to the lost Empire (evoked in the widow's initial speech), to the inferiority of the Spanish people contrasted with the magnificence of foreign countries, like Scandinavia, Great Britain and the USA, were not welcome within Franco's dictatorship, since they were an attempt to subvert the *status quo*.

Many critics have analysed the function of sarcasm in the novel and its ironic dimension. Since these are more narrative techniques than comic devices, they are dealt with in the chapter on style (Chapter 2). To summarise the kind of humour that is derived from sarcasm and irony and pervades the whole novel, it seems appropriate to quote the words of Lang (1983: 78), who states that Martín-Santos "tiene vocación de humorista, de un humor negro, como corresponde a la tradición española".

The widow's first speech (Ts: 20-9) epitomises the tone of the humour in the novel: it is redolent of voluntary blindness (if not silence), and is thus the breeding ground for parody, irony and sarcasm from the authorial stance. Her subsequent interventions throughout the novel are all tinged by a ludicrousness that stems from her ignorance and pretensions. Her mannerisms are a farcical source of easily apprehended humour in their affectation, which does not disguise the ignorance and foolishness of the speaker in the source text. However, the published translation does not reveal the same features, for the reasons explained in the previous paragraph: for example, the vulgarity of "se le emberrenchinó y le llegó a tupir los conductos" (Ts: 21) appears subdued in the target text: "till he got himself into a mess and his ducts became blocked" (TS: 15); also, the pretentiousness of "muchísimos posibles partidos de señores riquísimos que la habían querido llevar cuando ella estaba en la floración o eclosión o infrutescencia de su palmito..." (Ts: 277) is simplified into a sober translation: "all the opportunities offered by well-to-do men who wanted to set her up



when she was in the flower of her youth" (TS: 231). The landlady could be seen as a continuation of the picaresque tradition in Spanish literature: moving up in the social scale despite her sheer ignorance, thanks to her cunning and lack of conventional moral principles.

Also in a continuation of the literature of the Spanish Golden Age, Amador plays Sancho to Pedro's Quixote in a mock-heroic journey into the depths of Madrid's underworld in the post-war years. Satire acquires a social and political dimension, which encompasses whole episodes, like Pedro's first visit to the *chabolas*, the "soberbios alcázares de la miseria" (Ts: 37 and 50-54), and also isolated instances ("estando como estamos en un estado de derecho donde existen cosas tales como policía, jueces y capacidad denunciante del ciudadano libre", Ts: 13; and the exposition of the "economic law" which concludes with the words "cómo vivía todo este pueblo en lo que ellos mismos dicen -ellos sabrán por qué- que fueron los años del hambre", Ts: 18).

This aura of fake grandeur makes the German painter befriended by Pedro and Matías, a joke figure in his foreignness, become a character of biblical dimensions: he exits the fiction of *Tiempo de silencio* "arrebataado sobre un carro de fuego" (Ts: 93). In the same mock-epic context, el Muecas becomes an anglicised "Gentleman-farmer Muecasthone" (Ts: 67, normalised by Leeson into: "gentleman-farmer Muecas", TS: 55), whose livestock consists of stolen mice and their offspring.

The beginning of the scene of Florita's abortion (Ts: 129-30) is also narrated in a parodical key: the Swedish health service (Sweden representing the summit of modern civilisation for the Spaniards of that time) is used as a contrapuntal reference for the savagery of the methods applied in this particular operation. Again in the literary tradition, the brothel episode (Ts: 99-111), in which Pedro and Matías enter Doña Luisa's disreputable establishment as the culmination of a night of drunken indulgence, mimics the language of romance narrative ("el alcázar de las delicias", "maga de la noche", "el doncel enamorado", etc.). Once again, the gulf between language and the reality that it describes is designed to move the reader to laughter. Along a different literary line, the description of the cell to which Pedro is confined (Ts: 210-215) parodies the style of the French *nouveau roman* (see p. 194).

In *Tiempo de silencio* there are also some examples of more straightforward forms of humour, such as plays on words. Whereas in the examples quoted above, the humour

arises from the imbalance between subject matter and form, i.e. from the mismatch between register and content, in the case of the expressions below, translation tends to be a matter of specific occurrences.

When Amador coins a new term, “polivinazo” (Ts: 15), a portmanteau made of “polivinilo” (the actual substance to which he refers) and “vinazo” (a colloquial word used to signify cheap, nasty wine), the result is humorous because of his mistake. In his translation, Leeson suppressed the pun, and the comical element with it, although he emphasised Amador’s ignorance by other lexical means: “poly-what-you-may-call-it” (TS: 11).

On another occasion, the narrator exploits the polysemy of the expression “ser de pueblo”, which could mean both to have been born in a village or to be a country bumpkin, in an iterative fashion: “el hombre -aquí- ya no es de pueblo, que ya no pareces de pueblo, hombre, que cualquiera diría que eres de pueblo y que más valía que nunca hubieras venido del pueblo porque eres como de pueblo, hombre” (Ts: 19). The iteration of discourse elements, the syntactic structure and the play on words all contribute to the farcical content of the passage. In Leeson’s rendition the source-text meaning was transformed beyond recognition: “A man here is no longer a villager, no longer looks like he is from the village. No one would identify him as a villager. It would have been better if he had never come from the village” (TS: 14). Despite the repetitions, the furious pace of the Spanish is absent from the target text, and so is the humorous component.

Martín-Santos used a similar technique for a wordplay based on the name of one of Madrid’s train stations, Príncipe Pío. This name brings about a pun which summarises the bitter irony of Pedro’s destiny “¿Quién sería el Príncipe Pío?”<sup>93</sup> Príncipe, príncipe, principio del fin, principio del mal. Ya estoy en el principio, ya acabó, he acabado y me voy. Voy a principiar otra cosa. No puedo acabar lo que había principiado.” (Ts: 286). On this occasion, Leeson compensated the untranslatability of the play on words by introducing Latin terms into the target text: “Who was this Príncipe Pío? Prince, principal, *in principio*, the beginning of all, the beginning of the end, the beginning of evil. Here I am, *in principio*, in the beginning, it’s all over now, I’m all finished, and I’m going away. I’m going to begin something else. I can’t finish what I began.” (TS:

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<sup>93</sup>Príncipe Pío was Francisco Pío (d. 1723), son of Ascanio, Prince of San Gregorio, who settled in Spain as Field Marshal of Madrid and Barcelona.

239). He also included a footnote, in which he explains that the play on words uses the verb "*principiar*"<sup>94</sup> as "to begin".

A different type of wordplay is exemplified by the allusion to "el palacio de Mor-A-Pio" (Ts: 71), a phrase that elevates a tavern of ill-repute to the status of a boozing palace. "Morapio" is a colloquial term for alcoholic beverages, whose comical connotations are enhanced in this case by the spelling of the word. Both aspects (semantic and graphic) are missing from Leeson's rendition: "gin palaces" (TS: 58).

When humour is dependent on a culturally-specific term, the translation difficulties are greater. One of the prostitutes retorts to Matías's mythological allusion, "¡Electra, Electra, ven a mí!": "Aunque la llames no viene hasta las seis" (Ts: 111). While Matías, the well-educated middle-class young man, evokes the murderous daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, the unlearned harlot interprets his cry as a call for the electrical power to be restored ("Electra" being the electricity board, which in times of poverty was restricted to certain hours of the day). The name needs to be understood in its own cultural context for the pun to work. For that reason, Leeson's translation is mystifying: "Electra! Come to me, Electra!" "It's no good calling for it. It won't come on till six o'clock" (TS: 90).

More straightforward is the humour distilled from the purported grandiloquence and refinement of el Muecas's diction when trying to rise up to the cultural level of the young doctor (Ts: 58-63). When he apologises for his wife's lack of education ("Discúlpela que es alfabeta"), he uses the term "alfabeta", which does not exist, for "analfabeta". Leeson compensated by playing on the quasi-homonymy of "a literate" (TS: 49) and "illiterate". Further on, el Muecas tries to show refinement when referring to the mice's genitals: "se les hinchaban esos como testículos, con perdón"..., which is translated in a more elaborate manner by Leeson ("they got those lumps like testicles, if you'll excuse me saying so", TS: 50), who, nonetheless, managed to reflect the source-text humour.

El Muecas's pomposity stands in comical contrast with the vulgar simplicity of his daughter Florita, who expresses her admiration for her father's wisdom in the following terms: "Lo que es mi padre debía haber sido predicador o sacamuelas [...]. Bruto no le es más que en lo tocante a carácter, pero no en el inteletto" (Ts: 63).

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<sup>94</sup>This verb is not commonly used in Spanish.

Leeson's "corrected" her mistakes and refined her register, and, as a result, the linguistic characterisation of Florita became lost in translation: "My father should have been a preacher or a dentist. And yet they say he's stupid. He might have a stupid nature, but he's intelligent." (TS: 51).

The German painter's deficient command of the Spanish language (Ts: 83-91: "Bono" for "bueno"; "corpo" for "cuerpo"; "Esto no está nada pagado. [...] Y ahora está todo pagado", etc.) causes much hilarity in Pedro and Matías, and constitutes another example of the forthright humorous element in the novel. Leeson chose several strategies to present the painter's diction throughout the passage: "Goot" (TS: 68) shows German influence, "corpus" (ibid.) is taken directly from Latin, and "This is not paid [...] and now all is paid" (TS: 69) distorts English syntax in a way comparable to the distortion of Spanish syntax in the source text. Thus, the comic quality is preserved.

The reproduction in the target text of this kind of humour, which stems from the peculiarities in the speech of different characters, appears to be easily practicable, provided that there is an awareness of its function within the source text: the author's choice of vocabulary and discourse features deliberately seeks to provoke hilarity and to individualise the different characters through their expression. Yet, despite the presence of isolated humorous passages in *Tiempo de silencio*, the reader is presented mainly with a grim, bitter sort of humour, which comes from the grotesque in either self-deception or too much awareness. It is a form of humour that arises from excesses and imbalance, as reflected by the literary style of the novel. Thus, the predominant form of humour, one which is constant in almost every page of *Tiempo de silencio*, is a concealed one, and it can be argued that a knowledge of Spanish culture and history is required in order to understand it. Puns and more "direct" comic devices pose translatability problems of a different nature, but they can be more easily overcome or compensated.

The art of presenting the baseness of reality in a high style is not alien to the British literary tradition. Henry Fielding, for instance, excelled in parodying the commonplace in his mock-heroic novels, particularly in *Tom Jones* (1749). This is, therefore, an area in which both literary systems concur. The translation difficulty lies here not with the sub-genre itself, but with the content of *Tiempo de silencio*, and the context in which it appeared. In times of censorship, irony as a rhetorical device (saying the opposite of what is meant) is a very powerful weapon, and an excellent means of

getting a message through. Sarcasm, on the other hand, is used “como una forma de dar a una realidad anodina calidad expresiva. [...] Detrás de ese sarcasmo que informa todo el libro, tanto desde el punto de vista temático como el estilístico, se descubre un atroz pesimismo” (Clotas, 1970: 9).

#### 4. Summary

*London Fields* can be considered a comic novel in a sense that *Tiempo de silencio* cannot. The basic difference lies in the author’s approach to the subject matter. Luis Martín-Santos seeks to convey an ideological message through his novel. Martin Amis, on the other hand, uses humour mainly for humour’s sake. This is why the use of language is more playful in *London Fields* than in *Tiempo de silencio*. In the latter, there are more constraints arising from the content: word-play serves a thematical function. In the former, however, the mission of word-play is to amuse the reader.

The matter of the Spanish language itself makes the reproduction of plays on words that have been conceived in English very difficult. E.L. Galligan’s words, “it is a lot easier to say some things in one language than in another” (1984: 102), although they may sound overly simplistic, become especially relevant in the case of comedy. Besides, the kind of humour traditionally associated to the Spanish culture falls mainly in the situational category. As a consequence, the translation of any English text with a comic component into Spanish entails a whole series of problems, which comprehend not only the difficulties inherent in reproducing or compensating the comical elements of the text in the target text, but also the clash with a different mentality, not so well prepared to identify such elements. Hervey and Higgins affirm that “both humour itself and techniques of joke- and story-telling are to a great extent culture-specific” (1992: 137). This does not mean that between the different forms of appreciation of humour there lies an unbridgeable chasm; however, the existing gap is an aspect that has to be borne in mind when approaching the translation of a comic text.

The form of humour which relies on linguistic features poses bigger translatability difficulties in *London Fields*: its sheer bulk validates this statement, but also the fact that it is easier to pun in English than in Spanish further justifies it. The plays on words that appear in *Tiempo de silencio* do not underpin the fiction; they are rather isolated components in the novel. It is worth remembering at this point that humour which cannot be easily translated for linguistic reasons may also have cultural links.



For instance, the fact that English is a language which, because of its very nature, facilitates the creation of puns more than Spanish does imply that puns are more readily accepted and understood in an English-speaking context than in a Spanish-speaking one.

In these two novels, the humorous element relies on their respective cultural contexts, with regard both to the form and to the content, which inevitably poses translatability problems. In *Tiempo de silencio*, humour is more sinister, if not darker, than it is in *London Fields*, because it is founded on real circumstances (i.e. the socio-political circumstances in Spain at the pinnacle of Franco's dictatorship), rather than fictional events (the interaction of the characters in the novel) or speculation (global destruction by a nuclear war, for instance)<sup>95</sup>.

It can be argued that each of these novels is encoded in such a way that the humour in them is not easily decipherable by readers who are alien to the source culture, even when the purely linguistic hurdles have been overcome. This challenges the effectiveness of translation, since the target text will either be a "domesticated" version of the original (one which is composed in function of cultural elements which belong in the target culture), or one that cannot be apprehended easily by those who are not familiar with the contextual, cultural frame in which the source text belongs.

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<sup>95</sup>Some other elements in *London Fields*, such as social breakdown, are, however, more tangible.

## Chapter 6: Intertextuality

[...] every text is constructed as a mosaic of citations, every text is an absorption and transformation of other texts. (J. Kristeva; *Desire in Language: a semiotic approach to literature and art*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1969; p. 146)

### 1. Introduction

The notion of “intertextuality”, which the post-structuralist Julia Kristeva introduced in semiotics, is based on the premise that all texts exist in relation to other texts. This approach stands in contrast with that of Saussure’s structuralist semiotics, which tends to focus on the internal structures of texts, which are perceived as discrete, closed items. Intertextuality, as a semiotic property of texts, has a semantic dimension. However, this is not to say that intertextuality is purely a semantic phenomenon in itself: it can operate on the thematic or on the formal levels. A given text does not constitute an independent, isolated unit; rather, multiple bonds can be found that link this text to others, in respect of its thematical content, style, register, vocabulary, etc. This type of interrelation can be explained by the fact that authors do not operate in a cultural vacuum: on the contrary, they are exposed to the influences of their linguistic and cultural environment. Thus, a referential web is formed, and this web connects texts to one another through time.

Intertextual relations have been a popular object of analysis of recent linguistic and sociological theories, as well as contemporary translation theory (e.g. Hermans, 1985; Hatim and Mason, 1990; Hervey and Higgins, 1992). As the study of the concept developed, it was refined and classifications of the different modalities of intertextuality were made. Perhaps the most basic distinction is that between “intertextuality” (which links a text to *other* texts) and “intratextuality” (which involves relations *within* a given text)<sup>96</sup>. Yet more detailed taxonomies have emerged through the post-structuralist era.

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<sup>96</sup> Barthes uses the concept of “anchorage” in the context of advertising (1977: 37): linguistic elements can anchor the interpretation of images, and *vice versa*.

Genette, in *Palimpsestes* (1982), included intertextuality in his list of five “transtextual” types. The other four are: paratextuality (the relation between a text and the elements which physically surround it: footnotes, titles, covers, etc.), architextuality (the relation between a text and a genre or genres), metatextuality (a commentary of one text contained implicitly or explicitly in another text) and hypertextuality<sup>97</sup> (the relationship between a text and another text or genre which it transforms). Thus, he dissociated intertextuality in the strict sense (that which consists of quotations, allusions, references, etc.) from other, wider, types of links.

J.L. Lemke also denies the semantic autonomy of texts, along the same lines of reasoning: “Every text, the discourse of every occasion, makes sense in part through implicit and explicit relationships of particular kinds to other texts, to the discourse of other occasions.” (1985: 275), and outlines a classification of intertextual relations in four categories: generic, thematic, structural and functional, according to whether they refer to a genre, a theme, or whether the texts involved present a similar form or answer to similar purposes, respectively.

Hatim and Mason, in *Discourse and the Translator* (1990: 132) comment on another taxonomy of intertextuality, conceived in the framework of literary studies and introduced in the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of Semiotics*, edited by T.A. Sebeok (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1986). According to this taxonomy, which has a different bias from Lemke’s, intertexts fall into one of the categories listed below:

- a. Reference, when one discloses one’s sources by indicating title, chapter, etc.
- b. Cliché, a stereotyped expression that has become almost meaningless through excessive use.
- c. Literary allusion, citing or referring to a celebrated work.
- d. Self-quotation.
- e. Conventionalism, an idea that has become sourceless through repeated use.
- f. Proverb, a maxim made conventionally memorable.
- g. Meditation, or putting into words one’s hermeneutic experience of the effects of a text.

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<sup>97</sup> Nowadays, hypertextuality is a concept almost exclusively associated with on-line (computer) texts, which contain links to other texts which can be accessed by the reader in any particular order.

Hatim and Mason criticise this classification, on the grounds that it focuses on isolated elements of the intertextual process, rather than on the process itself. This is to say, it constitutes an extrapolation of the possible manifestations of intertextuality, and does not explain how intertextuality operates within the text, nor its purpose. It is arguably useful as a nomenclature that could be systematically applied for categorisation purposes. However, as Hatim and Mason point out, its value is very limited from the point of view of discourse analysis, since it does not provide parameters according to which intertextuality can be evaluated.

A link which is not explicitly included in the better-known classifications of intertextual types is the one which exists between a text and its translation(s). And yet, as Berman says: "The position that links a translation to its original is unique in its kind. No other relation – from one text to another, from one language to another, from one culture to another – is comparable to it." (1992: 183). Although this link is distinct from that which interconnects a corpus of translated texts, it necessarily intersects with it, because it is determined and defined by similar factors. In the words of Lambert: "literary translation and literary imports in general are goal-oriented activities designed to fulfil a need in the target literary tradition [...] Within this functional research paradigm, then, it is assumed that all translation activity (whether it involves producing, using or commenting on translations) is guided and shaped by such things as the norms, value scales and models which are prevalent in a given society at a given moment in time." (1998: 132)

The prevalent norms and values mentioned by Lambert also help configure the relationship between the source text and the target text. Their relative positions within a literary polysystem, as Even-Zohar and Toury have indicated, may depend on the perception of those who belong to the dominant literary system.<sup>98</sup> The core notion of translatability may also be determined by the target-culture polysystem, explain Pym and Turk, since it depends on factors which are external to the original text:

Translatability would [...] depend on the *target* culture, and especially on the translation culture existing within it; it would lean on previous translations of the same text or of other texts translated from the same language, literature or genre. It can also be influenced by the attention of critics, the interest and previous

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<sup>98</sup> Although, as Lambert, following Toury (1993) states, the reason why "Translators and translations function as translators/translations rather than as writers/literature" can also be due "to their own strategies" (1998: 1332).

knowledge of the receiver, the strategies of publishing houses and the historical context.” (1998: 276)

This approach adds a new dimension to Benjamin’s conception of translatability as a quality of the source text (see p. 35). It emphasises the complexity of the act of translation, and the importance of agents which are external to the source text itself, but the considerations that arise from the intertextual status of the target text and those which stem from the original are not mutually exclusive. The source text also stands in an intertextual network within its own literary (poly)system, and the factors that Pym and Turk mention regarding the target text, which can be linguistic, literary or cultural, also apply in its case. Berman’s words are illuminating in this respect: “... literary translatability is different, though literary translation, obviously, also knows linguistic translatability (and untranslatability). It consists in the fact that a work, emerging as a work, is always positioned at a certain *distance* from its language.” (1992: 126-27).

The most elementary intertextual link that connects a source text and its translation(s) could be understood in the framework of what Genette called architextuality (see above), i.e. the relationship between texts and genres. The importance of translation in this respect cannot be underestimated, because “within the space of European literature, [it] plays a decisive role, largely because it is the *transmission of forms*.” (Berman 1992: 13). As a result, foreign models become assimilated into cultural systems and, with time, as their origin is forgotten and they evolve within the adoptive culture, they are perceived as native. Lambert points at this age-old and ongoing interference as one of the reasons for the invisibility of translation:

Another reason why translation is often invisible and ambiguous is that not only entire texts but also text fragments and discursive patterns may be imported into the target literature. In this sense, the difficulty of drawing a clear line between what is original and what is translated in a given literary tradition reflects the wider difficulty of identifying what is indigenous and what is foreign in any language: all languages contain many elements and patterns which are ultimately foreign in origin. (1998: 131)

Even though many literary patterns (such as the sonnet, the novel, or the basic distinction between epic and lyrical poetry) and figures (Cervantes and Shakespeare, for instance) have transcended national boundaries and are often perceived as belonging to a larger construct (Western culture), it can be argued that “A commitment to intertextuality is also a commitment to difference and to becoming Other” (Fox:1995). Hence the importance of intertextuality (both in the strict sense, of intertextual occurrences in a text, and in the sense of what links the original to the



target text) in translation. As in every other aspect of this process, the translator is the key.

Intertextual occurrences can be assessed as to their translatability or untranslatability if their inclusion in the target text is deemed necessary. The translator will have to weigh their importance as to the comprehensibility of the text (i.e. from a semantic perspective), on the one hand, and as to the reproduction of stylistic features which are prominent in the source text, on the other. This chapter will explore the links between *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* and other texts (intertextuality in the narrow sense), and also the intertextual relation between the source and target texts, in terms both of the finished product and the more localised strategies that have been used in the published translations. This will be done by way of illustration, since Translation Quality Assessment is an area of translation studies which falls outwith the aims of this analysis (see p. 2).

## **2. Intertextual occurrences**

As far as intertextuality in the strict sense is concerned, the translator's interpretation of the source text and the strategies that he or she chooses are fundamental concerns. The question of the translation of intertextual occurrences is a complex matter for two reasons. First of all, because of the difficulty it entails in itself, and secondly, because it can be overlooked more easily than other aspects of translation, due to its very nature. The translation of the language does not present any problems other than those that the grammatical and/or phonetic structure of the intertextual occurrence in question may imply. However, if we interpret *translation* as the process that enables readers to comprehend a text that has been originally written in a language which they do not understand, within a cultural setting alien to them, the issue becomes a more complicated one. The translator has to go beyond the phonetic, lexical, syntactical, and/or semantic levels, in order to reproduce the connotations that the literary references may convey in the source text. A prior step to their transmission would be the identification of intertextual references, which often hinges on the translators' familiarity with their sources.

When an author chooses to borrow from other authors, he or she is, in a way, making that material his/her own, manipulating it, so that it serves a certain purpose within his/her own text. Sometimes, literary references will be simply a way of having

recourse to an authority. On other occasions, they will be inserted in the text as yet another narrative feature, as an information-conveying channel, and, in these cases, they constitute an appeal to those readers whose education or literary awareness enables them to establish this kind of complicity with the author, by virtue of their shared knowledge. Generally speaking, allusions of the first type will be identified as such in the text (unless their source is common knowledge), whereas those that fall in the second category will remain unidentified.

There is another “mode of intertextuality” (Hervey et al. 1995: 80), which manifests itself in the imitation of an author or style. This must be distinguished from the influence that various writers may have had on the author. The latter is largely irrelevant in itself as far as the finished product of translation is concerned, since it belongs to the field of literary criticism or textual commentary. It can, however, affect the translation process, given that the translator operates, to an extent, as a critic and commentator of the source text.

The main problem with translating intertextual occurrences lies at the semantic level, in how to make target-text readers perceive the literary reference as such, so that they can place its meaning in the global signification of the text and a commitment to difference and otherness (to paraphrase Fox; see above) is maintained. There is, however, one issue that jeopardises the actualisation and efficiency of this process: as mentioned earlier, the translator, in his/her role as a reader of the source text, has to be able to identify these intertextual landmarks, since their identification may be indispensable for their reproduction in the target text. It could be the case indeed that translators could apprehend these references instinctively, without being aware of their origin: for instance, when the reference involves changes in the narrative cadences, abrupt linguistic register changes (utilisation of archaisms, technicisms, poetic terms, etc.), or phonetic features (alliteration, rhyme, etc.) which cause a breach in the source text discourse that can be more or less evident. However, this is not always the case.

## 2.1. Intertextual occurrences in *London Fields*

In *London Fields*, literary references are pervasive. They span a wide spectrum, that goes from nursery rhymes (“When Nicola was good she was very very good. But

when she was bad...”<sup>99</sup>, LF: 16; “Jack Sprat would eat no fat”<sup>100</sup>, LF: 409), to the Bible. Some are explicit, i.e. their source is explained in the novel itself. Others, however, are integrated in the plot or formal structure of *London Fields* with no acknowledgement of their origin.

The fact that the three main characters in the novel that Samson Young is writing, Nicola, Guy and Keith, are presented to the reader in terms of more or less explicit literary “borrowing” gives an idea of the importance of intertextuality in *London Fields*. Samson Young himself appears, like Samson in the Milton poem, agonising.

Nicola Six is introduced as “The Murdere” (title of the second chapter of *London Fields*). This term was coined by D.H. Lawrence in 1920. Towards the end of the second chapter of *Women in Love* (a novel which is explicitly mentioned on page 194 of *London Fields*), we read: “It takes two people to make a murder: a murderer and a murdere” (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982; p. 82). Nicola, an admirer of Lawrence’s works, judging by the nature of her book collection, describes herself as a “Murdere” in a conversation with Samson Young (LF: 260). In the course of this conversation she also states: “I *am* a male fantasy figure”. Here we find a character endowed with self-awareness: Nicola is explaining her status as the product of a writer’s imagination. The literary connection is missing from Moreno’s translation of the novel, in which “murdere” is simply translated as “víctima” (CL: 28) or “víctima de un asesinato” (CL: 320).

Nicola shares with Lawrence’s heroines a restricted individuality, which only finds its expression through sexual relations: “she was promiscuous *on principle*, as a sign of emancipation, of spiritual freedom, freedom from men” (LF: 68). All her intellectual energy, her education, her erudition are subordinated to sex. Her obsession is conveniently disguised, the better to control men. As Martin Amis explained, “Keith she manipulates through sex, Guy through love, Samson through art” (*The Irish*

<sup>99</sup>...*she was horrid*, are the words that will immediately come to the mind of a British reader. This association will be, however, absent from the collective memory of the Spanish-speaking readership. As a result, the literal translation in CL does not pick up the implied meaning of the source text: “Cuando Nicola era buena, era muy muy buena. Pero cuando era mala...”, (CL: 29).

<sup>100</sup>There is a previous allusion to “the couple in the postcard joke. In the seaside café”. Thus, the thematical connection (the contrast of Lizzyboo’s obesity with the emaciated looks of Samson Young) will have to be reproduced in the target text. As a consequence, a translation which suits the meaning of this nursery rhyme line and which is easily recognisable in the context of the target culture is required. “El Gordo y el Flaco” (Oliver and Hardy) would fulfill this purpose, although the gender differentiation between the characters and the rhythmic pattern of the original would be missing. Moreno opted for maintaining the rhyme (“Juan Merino no quiere comer tocino...”, CL: 497), and including a footnote in which the original quotation is explained.

*Times*, 21 September, 1989). Her configuration as a manipulating woman also connects Nicola Six with another fictional character: Lady Macbeth. The parallel is started in a non-explicit manner, by means of a play on words. Nicola is referred to, disparagingly, as “Lady Muck”<sup>101</sup> on several occasions (LF: 93, 293, 339, 357). *Muck* and *Mac* are phonetically very similar, and the link is thus established. However, Martin Amis does not merely repeat those elements of his prose to which he wishes to attract the reader’s attention. He often clarifies them, so that the ingenious element is duly appreciated. In this case, he explains, with a subjunctive much in line with Shakespearean English: “But this was no lady. Unless she be--unless she be Lady Muckbeth...” (LF: 379).

Moreno’s decision to translate Lady Muck as “Lady Estrecha” (CL: 120, 359, 414, 434) has two main consequences. Firstly, the pun in the culmination of Nicola’s characterisation as “Lady Muckbeth” becomes lost in the somewhat incongruous translation: “Pero aquella no era una señora, no era una lady. A no ser que fuera..., a no ser que fuera Lady Estrecha y Retorcida...” (CL: 462). Secondly, and more importantly, the connection between Nicola and the Shakespearean character is absent from the target text.

*Macbeth*, the play, and the characters who appear in it are a recurrent element in *London Fields*, as an acknowledged literary allusion (LF: 244, 284, 423...), which provides a suitable background to the oblique allusion mentioned above. Also “Lady Macbeth” is one of the kisses in Nicola’s extensive repertoire (LF: 186). The fact that these allusions have been preserved in the published translation, compensates, to an extent, the loss of Nicola’s depiction as a modern-day Lady Macbeth. However, granted that the original pun cannot be literally translated into Spanish, its relevance in the characterisation of Nicola<sup>102</sup> points at the need to find a solution which would allow the reproduction of its semantic content in the target text. It seems appropriate to find a Spanish term which contains a phonetic element similar to *Mac* (“*maquiavélica*”, for instance) and introduce it in the target text the first time the allusion appears in the source text. In subsequent occurrences, it can be graphically reduced to the

<sup>101</sup>This expression is colloquially used in English to refer to women with airs and graces which do not befit their low position in the social scale. In this case, there are further issues that may increase the difficulties for obtaining a satisfactory translation. The verb *to muck* also has the colloquial meaning “to soil, to spoil”; and “to muck about”, as well as meaning “to misbehave”, in the collocation “to muck somebody around” often means “to play games with somebody”, “not to be truthful to somebody”, which is what Nicola does with the main male characters in *London Fields*.

<sup>102</sup>It could be argued that the “Macbeth” component is more relevant than the “Muck” element in this respect.



phonetically similar element ("Maq"). In this way, the translator would create a reference point for the appearance of "Lady Macbeth" at a later stage.

Samson Young remarks that, in a potential cinema version of his novel, Guy Clinch could be played by an actor chosen amongst "the ones who do the Evelyn Waugh heroes: meek, puzzled, pointlessly handsome" (LF: 282). His behaviour throughout the novel would make those readers familiar with Waugh's fiction aware of the parodical intentions of Martin Amis. An example which could be quoted here is that of Tony Last, of *A Handful of Dust* (1934), passive and quite blind to what goes on around him, whose wife, Lady Brenda, bored after seven years of marriage, starts an affair to bring some amusement back into her life. The translation of the reference does not present problems in itself. The difficulty, rather, lies with the source text: Spanish-speaking readers will not be as familiar with Evelyn Waugh's works (or their screen adaptations) as the British readership of *London Fields* is likely to be.

Keith Talent has been described by the critics as a modern transposition of a Dickensian villain<sup>103</sup>, although the narrator of *London Fields* tells us that not even Fagin would have wanted anything to do with him and his associates (LF: 134). Julian Symons associates Keith with Quilp, the hunchback in *The Old Curiosity Shop*, who "eats eggs, shell and all, drinks boiling tea without blinking, and bites a fork and a spoon until they bend" (*London Review of Books*, 28 September 1989). Talent's displays of "prowess", which include devouring Indian food so hot that it makes smoke come out of his mouth and ears, being in a permanent state of semi-drunkenness, constantly resorting to cruelty, compare, in their twentieth-century dimension, to those of Dickens' villains. That his literary stature matches theirs is, however, arguable.

But Keith, however, has a more Romantic self-perception, and fancies himself as Keithcliff (Heathcliff) in *Wuthering Heights* ("Of humble origin, success was soon his. Wed to Kathleen, all the birds were on his case", LF: 164), and as John Keith (John Keats), "Top wordsmith, and big in pharmaceuticals", (LF: 356). With regard to this "identification", the author reminds the reader, implicitly alluding to Christopher Ricks' critical work *Keats and Embarrassment* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), that "a book called *Keith and Embarrassment* would be a short book, trailing off after two

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<sup>103</sup> Incidentally, Melvyn Bragg also describes Marmaduke Clinch in similar terms. According to Bragg, the child roars "with the sound of a baby Dennis the Menace as much as any phenomenon from Dickens" (*The Listener*, 21 September 1989)



or three pages...”(LF: 360). If the humorous effect of the reference were to be preserved in the target text, the title of the book could be literally translated (for example, “*Keith y la turbación*”, Moreno’s preferred option, CL: 439). On the other hand, it is unlikely that those who cannot read *London Fields* in its original version will be acquainted with English literary criticism, and, therefore, the link with Ricks’ title would be missing from the target text.

Helen Davidson, in an article published in *Scotland on Sunday* (24 September 1989), comments on Martin Amis’s underlying attempts at inserting this character in the English literary tradition: “Keith Talent stands for the repellent antithesis of the ‘lusty miner, strapping farmer’ working class hero Amis believes has dogged English literature since Lawrence”. In any case, Keith would stand as a hyperbolised member of that tradition, since there has been an expansion in the limits of what is acceptable in literature (and in society), and the explicit and even the obscene have become part of convention.

The translation problems that the character’s presentation in terms of other literary figures poses are derived from the close links existing between the source text and its cultural context. The potential untranslatability factor lies, therefore, in the fact that what is recognisable from the source text by virtue of a shared background between the original author and the source-text readership, may not be grasped by the target-text readership because of their lack of familiarity with the relevant source-culture features (as it is in the case with Guy’s and Keith’s characterisations) or because of the translator’s choice of strategy (as it is the case with the references to Lady Macbeth).

Still on the subject of intertextual links which are not localised but rather affect the text as a whole, it could be claimed that the reproduction of a deliberate imitation of a given author’s style in the source text verges on the impossible. The most evident example in *London Fields* is the homage that Martin Amis pays to Vladimir Nabokov, one of his favourite novelists. John Greenya reports that Martin Amis has been “called by one critic ‘the nearest thing to a Nabokov that the punk generation has to show’ .” (in *Contemporary Authors*, 1988: 19). James Wolcott, who accuses Martin Amis of “Nabokovian necromancy”, remarks: “Emulating his admired Nabokov, he [Martin Amis] slices and polishes the artifices of fiction (doubles, authorial intrusions, fated encounters) into a series of transparencies, then deals them around the table as if they were playing cards. Like Nabokov, he keeps a steady patter that puts us in our place. Like Nabokov, he is forever playing mastermind” (*Vanity Fair*, March 1990).

Nabokov was very fond of alliterative enumerations in his prose<sup>104</sup>, and the imitation of his distinctive style starts in *London Fields* with the presentation of Guy Clinch as “the foil, the fool, the poor foal” (LF: 1). These words will echo, in different combinations, throughout the novel. Moreno was faithful to the semantic content of the triplet, rather than to its alliterative characteristics (“quién va a hacer de pista falsa, de tonto, de patoso”, CL: 11). However, it would have been possible to reach a compromise between both (for instance, “el pelele, el panoli, el pobre primo”), so that the sequence stands out in the target text, as it does in the original. However, its intertextual nature would not necessarily be clear. The translator can include a footnote which clarifies the connection, but resorting to this kind of commentary suits better a critical edition than a translation aimed at the general public.

Martin Amis’ insistent use of alliterations and triplets suggests that his intention was to introduce specifically Nabokovian elements in *London Fields* in an explicit manner. His repetitions and rhymes, like Nabokov’s, create a very strong rhythmical pattern. Whenever it is possible, the rhythmical pattern can be reproduced in the target text by means of phonic (alliteration, rhyme) and morphological (syllabic structure) devices similar to the original’s, even if the semantic content of certain passages has to be altered. For example, “Naughty and haughty” (LF: 48) could be translated as “Traviesa, aviesa”, although the meaning of the latter is different from that of the original expression. Similarly, “Keith’s cur’s sneezes” (LF: 75) could appear as “los estentóreos estornudos de Keith, como de can callejero” and “broken glass, chipped china, childblood, spilt milk, spilt milk” (LF: 140) as “cachos de cristal, loza destrozada, sangre del chiquillo, leche derramada, leche derramada”. Form could take precedence over matter, because that is the way in which the source text is configured. However, this was not the strategy chosen by Moreno, who favoured the semantic content of such passages over their formal characteristics: “Traviesa, activa” (CL: 69), “los estornudos de un perro callejero” (CL: 100), “vasos rotos, porcelana hecha añicos, el niño ensangrentado, leche derramada, leche derramada” (CL: 177).

Often, there is no clear division between the influence of an author and the imitation of this author. In the specific case of *London Fields*, as in the rest of Martin Amis’ narrative, the pervasiveness of the type of structures mentioned above seems to call for

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<sup>104</sup> See, for instance, the opening lines of *Lolita* (1955): “LOLITA, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth. Lo. Lee. Ta.”

the reader's complicity: the novelist appears to establish deliberately intertextual links that can be traced back to Nabokov's writings. However, the mirroring of his style in Spanish poses serious problems. Firstly, the translator has to identify the allusions in themselves for what they are. Secondly, he or she would have to make them comprehensible to his or her readership. Yet, whereas the source-text readers who are familiar with Nabokov's works in English can recognise the parallels in *London Fields*, the target-text readers, who, presumably, will have read Nabokov in translation (if at all), will not find it so easy. The intertextuality that exists between source texts is not necessarily maintained in the target texts, since different translators adopt different approaches to the originals<sup>105</sup>.

Bearing this in mind, the question arises as to whether it is relevant to maintain the Nabokovian traits of the original in the translated version of *London Fields*. It seems that what needs to be preserved is the formal structure of the allusions, even if their connotations are absent from the target text. This constitutes an example of how "total" translation is not possible. If the translator of Nabokov's novels had also translated Martin Amis', intertextual links would be more apparent, but this is not the case. In texts of these characteristics, the loss of such links seems unavoidable.

### 2.1.1. Literary references

As well as the sort of literary intertextuality described above, which can be seen as encompassing the whole novel, there is a significant array of more punctual intertextual occurrences in *London Fields*, which serve localised purposes. Some of them are easily translatable. This is the case of the titles of works which have been translated into the target language, such as Norman Cohn's *The Pursuit of the Millennium* (LF: 63), rendered as *En pos del milenio* (CL: 86), or Saul Bellow's *More Die of Heartbreak* (LF: 101), which was entitled *Son más los que mueren de desamor* (CL: 129). The same applies to the many mentions of authors whose names or works are mentioned in the novel, which can be imported *verbatim* into the target text: Shakespeare (LF: 30, 175, 202, 221, 347, 384...), Milton (LF: 87, 154), Keats (LF:

<sup>105</sup> For example, the opening lines of Enrique Tejedor's translation of *Lolita*, published by Ediciones Grijalbo in 1975 and Seix Barral in 1983, read as follows: "Lolita, luz de mi vida, fuego de mis entrañas. Pecado mío, alma mía. Lo-li-ta: la punta de la lengua emprende un viaje de tres pasos desde el borde del paladar para apoyarse, en el tercero, en el borde de los dientes." (1983: 9). The chiasmic alliteration "life"- "fire", "light"- "soul" has been lost in translation, as have the semi-rhyme "life"- "light" and the anaphoric t's which beat the rhythm in the last sentence. Although there is a repetition of sounds and structures in the target text, the "acoustic" effect it produces is quite different from that of the original.

342, 343, 352...), D.H. Lawrence (LF: 101, 131, 157, 165, 173, 174, 347...), P.G. Wodehouse (LF:284), John Updike (LF:367), Empson (LF:286), Conrad (LF: 352), or Nabokov (LF: 303) to quote but a few.

On some occasions, minimal adjustments will be required in the target text, for the sake of comprehensibility. For example: the last six lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet number 31 are reproduced on page 441. The poem is referred to as "One of the Sonnets, of course". This will bring to the mind of the average British reader the most famous and most widely quoted collection of Sonnets in the English language. However, they are not quite so popular throughout the Spanish-speaking world. As a consequence, a literal translation like *Uno de los Sonetos, claro* would be ambiguous. Further clarification, pointing in the direction of the author of the poems would seem to be required ("Uno de los sonetos de Shakespeare, por supuesto; CL: 536). This applies, to an extent, to the instance when the author muses: "I find that I am thinking of the words of the exemplary War Poet: 'It seemed that out of the battle I escaped...' [...]" (LF: 469). The "War Poet" in question is Wilfred Owen, and the line quoted here has been extracted from the poem entitled *Strange Meeting*, written in 1918, as has been the fragment included shortly after this first quotation. Moreno opted for rendering the mention as "Poeta de la Guerra" (CL: 568), a concept with which Spanish-speaking audiences will not be necessarily familiar. On the other hand, it could be argued that the original reference might remain obscure for source-text readers who may not be able to identify Owen as the source of the lines quoted, and that no further clarification is required in the target text.

As a rule, the English-speaking readers will be more familiar than the target-text readers with the names and/or works of anglophone authors, even though allowances for factors such as the education and knowledge of individuals have to be made. As a result, it will be easier for the former to apprehend the meaning of these mentions (sometimes, humorous, like Guy Clinch's remark on how brief a talk entitled "Milton and Sex", LF: 154, would necessarily be) within the context of *London Fields*. On the other hand, Martin Amis also mentions hispanic writers, whom the target text's readers will easily recognise. The novel *Crónica de una muerte anunciada*, by Gabriel García Márquez ("The diary she kept was therefore just the chronicle of a death foretold", LF: 17) and Jorge Luis Borges (LF: 389) are mentioned in *London Fields*. Some other mentions, like the ones of Tolstoy (LF: 172 and 305), Dostoevsky (LF: 352), Nadezhda Mandelstam (LF: 413), Stendhal (LF: 423) or Madame de Sévigné



(LF: 440) fall within neutral territory, since they belong neither to the source culture nor the target culture.

In the case of meditations, i.e. when the author makes value judgements or enlightening remarks about some of the works or authors he mentions, the translatability problem lies, once again, outwith the text itself, in the familiarity (or lack thereof) of the readers of the target text with the writers and works mentioned in the source text. However, there is a clear advantage in this category, since meditations offer an explanation within the original that will also have to appear in the Spanish version of the novel.

All in all, however, the reader of the target text is confronted with a cultural gap, since most of the authors and works mentioned in *London Fields* pertain to the English-speaking world. Thus, the potential translation loss will not lie with the Spanish version of the text (into which the names of the authors or works can be transferred), but with extratextual factors, which may affect the full comprehension of the novel. Admittedly, the names of the majority of the authors mentioned in *London Fields* will also be familiar for the Spanish-speaking reader, a factor which will help minimise the loss of information in the target text.

Thus, it seems clear that quotations from identified sources and other direct mentions do not pose major translation problems on the textual level, although they may present the reader of the target text with some difficulties as far as their recognition or understanding is concerned. One can assume that each nation has a collective cultural heritage, which creates links among its inhabitants and, at the same time, separates them from the members of other nations. Those links can be considered untranslatable. On the other hand, they can be explained. If the translator chooses not to do so, and to transmit merely the denotative aspect of language in these cases, the connotative one would be left open to those who can grasp it.

### 2.1.2. Literary allusions

Intertextual occurrences which are not identified as such in the source text are known as allusions. Sometimes, the mere translation of a literary allusion is not sufficient to reflect the extent of the relevance of its meaning in the general context of the novel. It is arguable whether a clarification of such allusions in the target text is necessary. An



argument against this would be the absence of such addenda in the original. Another one is that these allusions can equally escape the reader of the English text.

However, many of the literary allusions in *London Fields* serve a very localised purpose, and they are far from essential from the perspective of understanding the text as a whole, as, for example the echoes of the final chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses* in the "oozing yes" (LF: 82), or the hinting at Jonathan Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, when two pigs are described as "yahoos" (LF: 32).

Connotation is, generally, the most important component in literary allusions. As a result, the reproduction of their literal meaning is sometimes irrelevant. For instance, Samson Young exclaims that he resembles "the Hound of the Baskervilles" (LF: 2), after his flight from the USA: all blood-shot-eyed and rough-looking. The reference to the story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle is just an elaborate vehicle for the transmission of the actual meaning of the expression.

Sometimes, allusions are manipulated, in order to introduce an element of parody in the novel. The title of the sixth chapter of *London Fields*, *The Doors of Deception*, constitutes an interesting example of this kind of "deformation". This title parodies that of Aldous Huxley's work, *The Doors of Perception* (1954). Huxley himself borrowed these words from a line in *Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793), by William Blake<sup>106</sup>. The play on words appears to be the most important element of the title. However, a connection with Blake's lines<sup>107</sup> can be established on the grounds that the characters' behaviour in the chapter denotes that they have a narrow vision of the world: they see things through "narrow chinks" of their own "caverns". It is obvious that *percepción* does not rhyme with *engaño* (the most immediate translation of *deception*, which is the one chosen by Moreno). The loss of the rhyme means that the link between the texts would be also lost in the Spanish translation. In a case like this, the translator could follow Martin Amis' rule and sacrifice the semantic content for the sake of a localised stylistic effect, and translate the title of the chapter as *Las puertas de la decepción*. *Decepción* ("disappointment") is phonologically closer to *percepción* ("perception") than any accurate translation of *deception*. Thus, the readers who are familiar with Blake's and/or Huxley's work can identify the humorous element.

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<sup>106</sup> "If the doors of perception were cleansed every thing would appear to man as it is, infinite. /For man has closed himself up, till he sees all things thro' narrow chinks of his cavern".

<sup>107</sup> Martin Amis' admiration for Blake is patent from his very first novel, *The Rachel Papers*, whose main character, Charles Highway, uses the poet's pictorial works as part of his seduction technique (see fourth chapter: "Thirty-five minutes past eight: The Rachel Papers, volume one").

Occasionally, Martin Amis turns to the Graeco-Roman classics in order to adorn the style of his novel. He uses apostrophes in the manner of Homer or Virgil, which constitute a digression from the discourse and an attempt to attract the readers attention: “look how she smears and bespatters” (LF: 78); “hear him holler” (LF: 316). It is worth remembering that Martin Amis’ admitted that he had learned from his father’s novels “the English tradition of writing about low events in a high style” (in Haffenden, 1985: 24), and the parodic effect of these interjections is clear from the source text. It is, however, missing from Moreno’s translation of the passages, “cómo calumnia y pone verde a la gente” (CL: 103) and “oíd cómo se desgañita” (CL: 387), where the colloquial terms chosen sever the intertextual link with classical literature.

The allusions to the poetry of the classics can be reproduced in the target text with relative ease (for instance: “ved cómo vituperia y vilipendia”, and “oídle aullar”, respectively), so that they can be recognised by the readers acquainted with the epic poems of antiquity. The translations of these kinds of texts (the form under which they will be known to most of the readers) show more uniformity in stylistic matters than the translations of modern or contemporary novels, since they tend to appear in critical editions, and features characteristic of Latin or classical Greek, such as apostrophes, are very often detectable in the target text.

Something similar occurs with the oblique reference to *Macbeth* in the sentence “looking with dread for the blood on your hands” (LF: 3), translated by Moreno as “mirarte las manos a ver si hay sangre en ellas” (CL: 12). The main flaw in this rendition is the switch in register (formal in English, informal in Spanish). And yet the use of formal language in Spanish would not necessarily guarantee the preservation of the intertextual link. The introduction in the target text of a clarification along the lines of “..., como Lady Macbeth” would clarify the matter. As has been mentioned above, non-explicit literary allusions can go equally unnoticed by the readers of the source text and the target text and some would consider that additions of this type are illegitimate. Nevertheless, compensation for the sake of comprehensibility seems to be justifiable. An alternative solution would be to include a footnote, or end note, in order to explain the allusion. However, as it has been explained elsewhere, the suitability of this type of clarification in a text of *London Fields*’ characteristics is doubtful.

### 2.1.3. Self-reference

There can be found in *London Fields* examples of *verbatim* reproduction of expressions that appear in other writings by Martin Amis. For example, an aeroplane is described as the “crucifix of the heavens” (LF: 274), an image which appears in other novels (see p. 134). The narrator explains that “[Keith] wouldn’t cross the road for love” (LF: 27), a sentence which Martin Amis uses on page 72 of his essay collection entitled *The Moronic Inferno and Other Visits to America*.

In the case of self-reference, the disadvantage for the readers of the target text, as opposed to those of the source text, resides in the fact that Martin Amis’ books have been rendered into Spanish by different translators (see bibliography). This implies that there may not exist a uniformity in the expression of such concepts, whose identification would become more difficult, as a consequence.

### 2.1.4. Non-literary intertextuality

Intertextuality is not limited to literary works. A literary text can have intertextual links with other types of discourse, such as publicity, journalism, cinema, television, songs, etc. Its claims to modernity make *London Fields* host to a number of references to strictly contemporary discourse modalities, such as the ones just mentioned. Further links with media elements are analysed in the chapter dealing with culturally-bound terms. Most of them are part of Keith Talent’s speech.

In the chapter on Linguistic Varieties the influence of sports-journal jargon on Keith Talent has been examined as part of the analysis of his idiolect. His mode of expression is also influenced by tabloids and magazines (“Mutual body pleasure. The importance of sufficient foreplay. A full but firm figure. Consenting adults”, LF: 328), publicity (“Audi. [...] Saab Turbo [...]. Fuel injection. Listen, mate...”, LF: 224), and television (“Postman Pat and his black-and-white cat”, LF: 323). These utterances do not pose translation difficulties *per se*. On the other hand, their intertextual links become lost in translation, due to the absence of their reference points from the target culture. The same applies to the intertextual links with popular songs. Keith warbles: “She wore an itsy-witsy teeny-weeny. [...]” (LF: 127), and Nicola quotes: “Them that’s got shall get, them that’s not shall lose. So the *Bible* said” (LF: 173). The

biblical source can be found in Luke, 19:26<sup>108</sup>, although the sentence is a line from Billie Holiday's song, *God bless the child*, from 1941.

Keith Talent is part of a tradition that goes beyond the merely literary, and encompasses other aspects of contemporary English culture. The author admitted his character's debt to Alfie, the main character in the eponymous Paramount film, directed by Lewis Gilbert in 1966, who was played by Michael Caine: "What Keith has that Alfie has is a completely thoughtless, cheerful inversion of what counts as morality for anyone who thinks about it for more than ten seconds--instinctively going for the immoral all the time" (*Time Out*, 13-20 September 1989). Besides this life-philosophy, Keith also shares with Alfie the tendency to apply the neutral third person singular pronoun to women ("Uh, it's up there, mate", LF: 144; "Sad little smile on its face. Like--like she was pining. Pining. Pining its little heart out", LF: 217; "I'm just worried she's gone do itself an injury", LF: 225).

The problems posed by this type of reference are not limited to the lack of familiarity of the target audience with Alfie's original mode of expression: they are compounded by the presence of the neutral third person singular pronoun and possessive adjective. The former could not be used in such collocations in Spanish and, as to the latter, it is identical to the masculine and feminine forms. An added difficulty is that the use of the pronoun "it" can lead to some confusion, as illustrated by Moreno's translation of "Uh, it's up there, mate" (where "it" refers to Nicola) as "Es allí, colega" (CL: 181). If the actual usage of "it" and "its" is untranslatable, its general implication does not need to be: it can be compensated by lexical means (the inclusion of pejorative terms, such as "tipa", or "elementa"), for instance.

**Proverbs and clichés** are also examples of cultural difference. When translating proverbs which are part of a literary work, a translator has essentially three options:

- a. To translate the proverb by a proverb that conveys the same meaning in the target language. Thus, the English "Cobblers' children have no shoes" could be translated as "En casa de herrero, cuchillo de palo".
- b. To translate the proverb by means of another proverb which has a different meaning, but contains the element(s), whether phonological, lexical or syntactical

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<sup>108</sup> "I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away".

which are required in order to replicate in the target text the effect that the original saying has in the source text. In this way, if what is needed is to reproduce in the target text a reference to shoemakers, “Cobblers’ children have no shoes” could be translated as “Zapatero, a tus zapatos”.

c. To translate the proverb according to its meaning or other relevant features (for instance, rhythmical patterns), even if it does not constitute a proverbial expression in the target language.

Of course, the first two strategies may not always be available. The third one, however, should be easier to accomplish, as a rule.

Many English proverbs have a more or less similar counterpart in the Spanish culture. This is not the case of “There are plenty of fish in the sea” (LF: 262). Calque (“Hay muchos peces en el mar”, CL: 322) would appear to be the most appropriate translation strategy here, for a double reason. In the first place, the meaning of the source text expression is transparent enough. Secondly, the narrator uses it as a starting point for an ironical reflection on the fact that there are fewer and fewer fish in the sea each day. The death of the planet through environmental damage is one of the main thematic elements of *London Fields* and, consequently, it seems essential to maintain the semantic content of the original in such an occasion.

A further example of this type of expressions is the saying “Beauty is in the eye of the beholder” (LF: 127). In fact, these words come from chapter twelve of *Molly Bawn* (1878), by Margaret Hungerford<sup>109</sup>. In this case, too, calque seems to be the most appropriate strategy (“La hermosura está en los ojos de quien la mira”, CL: 160).

## 2.2. Intertextual occurrences in *Tiempo de silencio*

Given that nobody writes in a vacuum, even when a novel is perceived as a breakthrough in the literary tradition of a country (and if there is an aspect of *Tiempo*

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<sup>109</sup>According to *The Methuen Dictionary of Clichés* (1992), this is “the first exact statement of the cliché in print”. The concept itself is very old. Shakespeare expressed it as follows in *Love’s Labour’s Lost* (2:1): “Beauty is bought by judgement of the eye. It has not been dealt with in the section on literary quotations, since it has become, to adopt Sebeok’s terminology (1986), a **conventionalism** (the origin of the quotation has been forgotten through use), a **proverb** (currently, the said quotation is used as an adage), or even a **cliché**.”



*de silencio* on which all the critics agree, it is its innovative impact), its roots can be traced back to the works of other authors. *Tiempo de silencio* is no exception, and many intertextual links, some obvious, some more obscure, can be detected on its pages. Clotas (1970: 9) describes the thematic scope of this novel as a “panorama argumental entre galdosiano y verbenero”. He also claims that “Martín Santos echa raíces en toda la tradición literaria que va desde Cervantes y Góngora a la generación del 98” (ibid.: 10).

Mainer sees *Tiempo de silencio* as a continuation of the literary denominators which had characterised the Spanish tradition since the end of the nineteenth century: “la respuesta de *Tiempo de silencio* engloba también los presupuestos globales de toda una literatura nacida con la crisis de fin de siglo y esterilizada en su obsesiva temática sobre la personalidad, en su tentación populista, en su reiterada dedicación a la metafísica del país, tras de lo que se ocultaba la profunda frustración de una clase social -la pequeña burguesía intelectual- [...]” (1975: 20).

As well as in chronologically close national models, Martín-Santos found inspiration in authors and works from all over the world and from all periods. Suárez Granda (1986: 56-60) provides a classification of literary quotations in *Tiempo de silencio*, in which he establishes eight general categories: Indian literature, Graeco-Roman literature and mythology, the Bible, popular literature, modern Western literature, Spanish literature, thinkers and other allusions. A classification of this nature, although not exhaustive, is a good reference point, yet it cannot reflect appropriately the extent of intertextual links in the novel. Since it is structured from a thematic point of view, it lists references and allusions indiscriminately, and ignores a systematic analysis of more global aspects, i.e. those which affect the text, or large passages of it, as a whole.

The links with foreign authors have been highlighted by several critics. Tena, for instance, remarks on the concomitance with Dante: “L’anecdote du roman se développe dans un univers constitué par un réseau de lieux clos, étanches même, symboles parfaits de l’incommunicabilité. Ces lieux [...] reçoivent parfois des appellations «dantesques»: «antro» (p. 27), «averno» (p. 170)... Le passage de l’un à l’autre de ces mondes est toujours risqué, comme toute transgression. Des risques du même ordre son complaisamment relevés par Dante tout au long de son oeuvre” (1980: 34). Clotas (1970: 10) sees Kafkaesque connections in Martín-Santos’ prose: “quizá

sea posible relacionarlo con Kafka en algunos aspectos”, connections which, he explains, are amplified in *Apólogos* (1970).

The existentialist tone of *Tiempo de silencio* has inspired several studies of the Sartrean roots of the novel (see, for instance, Labanyi: 1985 and Romera Castillo: 1980). The influence of the French philosopher is certainly the most apparent. As Labanyi proposes, Sartre’s theories can be seen as the driving force behind the characters’ actions. However, the presence of other thinkers is also felt in *Tiempo de silencio*, such as Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>110</sup>, José Ortega y Gasset<sup>111</sup> or Sigmund Freud<sup>112</sup>.

Nevertheless, from a purely literary point of view, the origins of *Tiempo de silencio* can be found elsewhere. Martín-Santos himself acknowledged his debt to the Graeco-Roman classics (he explained that the bases of his syntax are to be found “en la literatura clásica latina”; Beyrie, 1980: 5) and with James Joyce (he mentioned *Ulysses* as one of his favourite novels in an interview with the Hispanist Janet Winecoff-Díaz, 1968: 237). This debt involves matters of style, themes, and, in the case of the latter, aims (renovation of the novel). Mainer (1975: 16) speaks of an “aire inequívocamente joyceano” in *Tiempo de silencio*. Clotas (1970: 11) elaborates: “La comparación con el *Ulises* se impone varias veces durante la lectura de *Tiempo de silencio*. En este sentido Martín Santos vino a llenar un importante vacío en la historia de la novela moderna en España: el acuse de recibo de una de las más importantes obras literarias de nuestro siglo.” He mentions several parallels between both novels: the use of the interior monologue, the theory on Cervantes, which he sees as a mimicry of the reflections on *Hamlet* in *Ulysses*, the brothel episode and the parody of different literary styles (1970: 10-12).

Alfonso Rey in his extensive bibliography on Martín-Santos (1977: 255-63), mentions several other authors who have dealt with the influence of Joyce in the writing of *Tiempo de silencio*. Joyce’s influence, as that of the classics, is obvious throughout the whole text. Mainer argues in his critical edition of *Tiempo de destrucción* (1980: 16-17): “la verborrea de Martín-Santos no es simplemente una copia de la de Joyce,

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<sup>110</sup> “¿Qué es lo que pide todo placer?” [Ts: 217], is a notion taken from *Also Sprach Zarathustra* (1883-85).

<sup>111</sup> Martín-Santos claims: “masas inermes son mostradas como revolucionadas” (Ts: 157), in an allusion to the argument behind Ortega’s *La rebelión de las masas* (*The Revolt of the Masses*), 1929. His mention of “sangre visigótica enmohecida” (Ts: 158) points in the direction of Ortega’s theory according to which the Spaniards descend from the racially impoverished Visigoths.

<sup>112</sup> Pedro’s metaphorical emasculation (“Es cómodo ser eunuco”, Ts: 293), which is an image for the incompleteness of the Spanish people, echoes Freud’s studies on the fear of castration.

sino en todo caso una adaptación de lo que podríamos llamar las fuentes del estilo de Joyce a los recursos de la lengua española<sup>113</sup>: la utilización de términos científicos, la parodia -original en este sentido- del estilo objetivista, el tono coloquial usual en la conversación intelectual de la época, el recuerdo de la sintaxis latina (cláusulas absolutas, supresión del artículo, abundancia de gerundios)...”.

The connections with Joyce are mainly thematic, which means that they can be more easily recognisable in translation than stylistic intertextuality. As mentioned above, there is also a similarity of aims and a parallel use of innovative prose elements in the work of Martín-Santos. However, even if we leave aside the obvious differences between the material which each of the authors was using, the English and Spanish languages, respectively, the style of Joyce and that of Martín-Santos are rather different. The former's is, paradoxically, more naturally obscure, and the sheer physical dimensions of *Ulysses* make *Tiempo de silencio* seem meagre by comparison.

As far as the thematic is concerned, Martín-Santos adapts Greek mythology in a similar manner to Joyce: he makes it contemporary. Nevertheless, mythological allusions or parallels, which are not specified in *Ulysses*, but can rather be inferred from the plot, are made explicit on several occasions in *Tiempo de silencio*: “odisea” (Ts: 122), “Nausicaa” (Ts: 125), “automedonte” (Ts: 126), “Las dueñas [visualised here as the three Parcae] tejieron el necesario silencio” (Ts: 140), “Sísifo” (Ts: 153), “Néstor” (Ts: 231), “Amador-Casandra” (Ts: 289).

Beyrie (1980: 5) makes a distinction between the role of the Homeric model in *Tiempo de silencio* and other, more concrete, literary elements which appear in the novel: “D'autant que si le modèle homérique a valeur emblématique, c'est l'ensemble de la littérature, de ses symboles et de ses mythes qui se voit ici mis en cause: des textes de Cervantes, bien entendu, mais aussi de J. Manrique, Lorca, Góngora, J.R. Jiménez, Quevedo, Horace, Virgile, Anderson, Vélez de Guevara, Calderón, fray Luis, Shakespeare, d'autres encore [...]”.

Yet another distinction ought to be made: the one between literary references and allusions which can be found in the text, on the one hand, and the literary forms into which Martín-Santos shapes certain passages, on the other. As in *London Fields*, there

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<sup>113</sup>See p. 86 for an appraisal of this comment.

are several examples of stylistic intertextuality in *Tiempo de silencio*. In the chapter dealing with style, it has been mentioned that certain passages stand out for reasons of literary tone. For example, Pedro and Amador's approach to the shanties is narrated as an epic episode; Matías, when drunk in the brothel, speaks like a classical hero; Ortega's lecture is recounted in a parodic tone, imitating the style of the philosopher; and the cell to which Pedro is confined is described in the style of the French *nouveau roman*.

These stylistic links become almost imperceptible in Leeson's translation, where "los soberbios alcázares de la miseria" (Ts: 50) are simply turned into "the fortresses of misery" (TS: 39) and "aquellas oníricas construcciones" (Ts: *ibid.*), into "nightmarish constructions" (TS: 39-40). Similarly, the syncopated description of the cell loses its clinical bareness due to the introduction of cohesive devices and breaks: "La celda es más bien pequeña. No tiene forma perfectamente prismática cuadrangular a causa del techo. Éste, en efecto, ofrece una superficie alabeada cuya parte más alta se encuentra en uno de los ángulos del cuadrilátero superior. Aparentemente, cada dos células componen una de las semicúpulas sobre las que reposa el empuje de la enorme masa del gran edificio suprayacente." (Ts: 210) was translated as: "The cell is very small indeed. It is not of a perfectly cubic form, as the roof slopes from a higher wall to a lower wall, having its highest point along one of the sides of the upper quadrangle, thus suggesting that each cell is half of a series of cupolas supporting the great mass of the building above." (TS: 173). This is not to say that this type of intertextuality is untranslatable, but it serves to emphasise how important it is to recognise intertextual links when producing the target text.

As Martin Amis did in *London Fields*, Martín-Santos also presents some of his characters in terms of other fictional creations. The critics have commented abundantly on the parallelisms between Pedro and Amador, on the one hand, and Don Quijote and Sancho, respectively, on the other (e.g. Suárez Granda, 1986: 8). In *Tiempo de silencio*, as in Cervantes' novel, we find the world of ideas and aspirations, embodied by Pedro, in contrast with a more prosaic, more materialistic, down-to-earth approach to reality (Amador's).

Pedro has been perceived as a continuation of several heroes (or anti-heroes) in the Spanish literature of the turn of the century. Mainer (1975: 17) quotes Fernando Morán as establishing a link between him and Andrés Hurtado, the main character in *El árbol de la ciencia* (1911), a novel by Pío Baroja. Then he goes on to elaborate on

Pedro's resemblance to other fictional characters: "La imagen del muchacho de clase media, propenso al autoanálisis depresivo, solicitado por tentaciones de abulia y abandono, recuerda efectivamente no sólo al famoso personaje de Baroja sino a un Antonio Azorín, a un Fernando Ossorio y, en definitiva, a tantos otros que a principios de siglo testimoniaron la crisis intelectual de una burguesía marginada."

Intertextual links have also been observed between the landlady, Dorita's grandmother and the heroes of picaresque novels, notably *Lazarillo de Tormes* (Rey, 1977: 28). She is a woman who, like Lazarillo, tries to climb up the social scale by means of unorthodox methods, with complete disregard for the others. However, unlike Lazarillo, she fails in her purpose.

Some critics (e.g. Rey, 1977: 29) also mention the possible Cervantine echoes in the two names, Encarna and Ricarda, which are given to Muecas' wife in the novel. They have seen in this a mirroring of the five names of Sancho's wife in *Don Quijote*. However, as mentioned earlier, the fact that Dorita's mother is referred to as both Dora and Carmencita seems to point in the direction of an authorial lapse (see p. 141), since Martín-Santos admitted to writing his novel without a plan, carrying out only minimal corrections: "Escribo sin haberme trazado previamente el plan de la obra. Cada capítulo lo escribo de una vez en un único vómito. Corrijo poco, solamente palabras sueltas" (in Winecoff-Díaz, 1968: 237).

Once again, the translatability problems arise not from translation difficulties as such, but from the links between the novel and the source culture, which may not be recognisable from the target text because of the lack of familiarity of its readers with the original cultural frame. This, however, is not always the case: for instance, as far as the Cervantine echoes are concerned, the universality of themes and characters, or even episodes<sup>114</sup>, facilitates the grasping of the allusion by audiences from other countries.

#### 2.2.1. Literary references

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<sup>114</sup>This is the case of Don Quixote's fight against the windmills, which he believes to be giants (part I, chapter 8). Martín-Santos' allusion reads: "Ya no como gigantes en vez de molinos, sino como fantasmas en vez de deseos" (Ts: 10). Leeson's translation is equally clear as far as the intertextual link is concerned, even though its semantic content differs from that of the source text: "The giants that were the windmills of long ago are the ghosts of our desires today" (TS: 6).



As well as these influences, more immediate, specific intertextual links with authors and literary works can also be found scattered across the novel. Although Martín-Santos “borrows” from a wide spectrum of world literature, he did not acknowledge his sources in *Tiempo de silencio*. Some are famous enough to be recognised by the average source and target culture readers (the previously mentioned Cervantes, the Bible, children’s stories<sup>115</sup>). Others are more obscure, and can be overlooked by those who do not have an extensive knowledge of literature or philosophy, not only in translation, but also in the original, as could be the case with what Leeson calls the “esoteric reference” to *El diablo cojuelo*, by Vélez de Guevara, “¡Qué diablo-sorprendente cojuelo-sorprendido [...]!” (Ts: 269). Leeson explains this reference in a footnote, in order to preserve the intertextual link, absent from his somewhat cryptic translation: “The sight revealed here would astound even the limping devil” (TS: 224). Thus, the link that is obvious from the source text, becomes meaningless in English.

The same applies to the allusion to Jorge Manrique’s *Coplas*, “de los ríos que se pierden en el mar” (Ts: 8) which can be interpreted as such (the exact words of Manrique’s elegy are “Nuestras vidas son los ríos/que van a dar en el mar”), and also as a reference to the dryness of the greater part of the Spanish territory, despite its many rivers (and the many reservoirs, mostly useless, built during the dictatorship years). Leeson’s rendition, “the rivers which lose themselves in the sea” (TS: 4), does not have the familiar ring of the Spanish expression. Similarly, the allusion to a well-known couplet in Tirso de Molina’s drama *El burlador de Sevilla*, “que no hay plazo que no se llegue,/ ni deuda que no se pague” (Act III, l. 929-930), appears as a literary conclusion to the series of events in which Pedro had found himself involved and which lead to Cartucho’s revenge in the death of Dorita: “que no hay plazo que no se cumpla ni deuda que no se pague” (Ts: 285). The untranslatability of the link lies, again, in the shared knowledge of source culture readers which target culture readers do not possess. A translation along the lines of that provided by Leeson (“that there is

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<sup>115</sup> Surprisingly, an allusion to one of the most famous passages of Perrault’s tale *Little Red Riding Hood*, in the form of a copy of its syntactical structure, becomes lost in Leeson’s translation: “¿Pues, para qué tiene tan listo el ojo? ¿Para mirarnos mejor! ¿Para qué tiene tan alto el cuerno? ¿Para encornarnos mejor!” (Ts: 157). The universality of the tale would have ensured that the allusion will be recognisable from the target text, provided that the translator reproduces it by means of the formula which is used in the English version (“All the better to...”). Leeson, however, ignored this form and translated the passage as follows: “Then, why is his eye so clear? To see us better! Why is his horn lifted so high? To gore us the better!” (TS: 129). As a result, the intertextual link is missing from the target text.

no pledge unkept nor debt unpaid”, TS: 238) cannot maintain the intertextual connection.<sup>116</sup>

The reverse can be exemplified by the allusion to Joyce: “del mismo modo que la hija pudiera ver una epifanía un tanto rezagada...” (Ts: 44), since epiphanies, or sudden, intense revelations, are a topos in his prose. Given that the allusion comes from the target culture, it should be even more easily perceived in the target text than in the source text, and thus intertextuality is preserved. In other cases, the references are as remote for the target-text readers as they are for the source-text ones: Vatsyayana, the author of *The Kamasutra*, is invoked on page 157.

### 2.2.2. Literary allusions

A different instance occurs when an intertextual reference which is as obscure in the source text as it is in the target text is not acknowledged within the former. This is the case of the allusion to a lesser-known Cervantine work, *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* (1613): “hasta en las ansias de la muerte” (Ts: 77) echoes a triplet in its dedication: “Puesto ya el pie en el estribo/con las ansias de la muerte,/gran señor, ésta te escribo.” However, whereas the strange collocation in the source text signals a possible link, Leeson’s more prosaic translation hides it: “on his deathbed” (TS: 63).

Some allusions, on the other hand, are part of a wider cultural heritage, such as the mention of “la platónica caverna” (Ts: 233), in reference to Plato’s *Dialogues*. The same applies to the names of foreign novelists that are mentioned in the course of the literary gathering at the café, as a touchstone, it is implied, of the intellectual stature of those present: “No ha leído a Hemingway” (Ts: 79), “Ha leído a Proust” (Ts: 80). This type of mentions is usually accompanied by a meditation in *Tiempo de silencio*. They illustrate Martín-Santos’ preoccupation with the state of Spanish literature. But the art of his contemporaries does not stand on its own: the author puts it into perspective by inserting it in a literary tradition which he knew well. The most

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<sup>116</sup> If the translator wishes to signpost the presence of an intertextual link, that can be achieved by including an explanatory footnote. This is the strategy followed by Leeson in the case of the allusion to *El libro de las Moradas*, a work by the sixteenth-century mystic Santa Teresa de Jesús (see TS: 243): “¿Cómo haremos para penetrar en las más avanzadas y recónditas y profundas de las Moradas donde nos es preciso habitar?” (Ts: 290). Another option is to elaborate on the content of the source text within the target text itself. Thus, Leeson translated “las palabras vacías de Ramón y su fantasma greguerizándose todavía a chorros en el urinario de los actores maricas” (Ts: 80) as “the empty ghosts of Ramón Gómez de la Serna’s *Greguerias* flowing from homosexual actors in the urinal” (TS: 65), and included a footnote explaining the nature of the “greguerías”.

extensive meditation in *Tiempo de silencio* (Ts: 74-77) concerns Cervantes' art and life. As he walks along the streets of old Madrid, Pedro remembers that both Lope de Vega and Cervantes had lived there. He evokes the figure of the latter in a meditation that moves from his character and the motivation behind his writings to a brief analysis of *El Quijote* (in six "espirales", after the fashion of Dante) and, finally, to a reflection on his tragic end. The passage reveals a certain nostalgia for the Golden Age of Spanish letters, which is implicitly contrasted with what the author considered to be the sorry state of Spanish literature in his day.

Therefore, this type of intertextuality serves a critical function in the novel, as exemplified by the comment: "ese vacío con forma de poema o garcilaso que llaman literatura castellana" (Ts: 80), simplified by Leeson into: "that vacuum which they call Castilian literature" (TS: 65). Also, Martín-Santos' admiration for English-language authors is made explicit in the "Hay que leer el Ulysses. Toda la novela americana ha salido de ahí, del Ulysses y de la guerra civil [...] Si no lees no vas a llegar a ninguna parte. Seguirás repitiendo la pequeña historia europea de Eugenia Grandet" (Ts: 81-2).

### 2.2.3. Non-literary intertextuality

In *Tiempo de silencio*, as in *London Fields*, there also appear allusions to popular songs. Amador mentions "las seguidillas del Rey David" (Ts: 62), a deformation of the proper title, "Las Mañanitas del Rey David", which Leeson translated in standard biblical form as "the songs of King David" (TS: 50), losing, in the process the comical effect of the original. In some other instances, the inclusion of lyrics serves a more important purpose within the novel: that of social criticism. With the line "vivan-las-caenas" (Ts: 273), taken from a "copla", Martín-Santos reflects on the alienation of the Spanish people, who, with condescending pride ("orgullo condescendiente", *ibid.*), admit that chains are something good. Leeson translated the verse as "Hurrah for our chains!" (TS: 227), maintaining the semantic content of the source text, in spite of the unavoidable loss of the intertextual link. On another occasion, a demagogic interpretation of history is the target of Martín-Santos' implicit condemnation: "Eugenia - de Montijo - hazme con - tu amor - feliz - yo en cambio - voy a hacerte - de la Francia - emperatriz" (Ts: 273). Leeson imitated the reproduction of the rhythmical pattern of the song substituting suspension points for dashes in the target text: "Eugenia... de Montijo... give me... your love... and I will make you... Empress... of France" (TS: 228). The rhyme ("feliz" – "emperatriz"), however, disappears, which

means that the passage would not be immediately identified as a song, were this fact not indicated in a footnote.

The intertextual link which carries the message becomes lost because it is established with an element which is alien to the target culture and the target language, since it is only recognisable in its original form. This loss (which, as has been shown above, can be compensated by means of an annotation) appears to be unavoidable, yet it could be argued that in the last two cases what is important is the transmission of the meaning contained in the source text (i.e. the mockery of social immobility and popular resignation), which is comparatively straightforward.

The strategies for the translation of **proverbs and clichés** (see pp. 189-90) were intended as guidelines for general application. They are, therefore, also relevant to the examples from *Tiempo de silencio* which follow.

Florita quotes the popular proverb: “No se hizo la miel para la boca del asno” (Ts: 60). Since what is important in this case is the meaning of the expression, the translator can opt for translating the saying. This would most certainly ring strange in the target language (“Honey was not made for the mouth of the ass”, or, as Leeson preferred, “You don’t feed honey to donkeys”, TS: 48), although target-text readers may be able to identify it as what is really is: a Spanish proverb in translation. A second, perhaps more appropriate, solution would be to substitute a target language proverb for the original one in the target text. A straightforward equivalent cannot be easily found in the target language, which means that one with a different but close meaning would have to be chosen. In this case, the biblical “cast pearls before swine” would adequately fit the context, with the added bonus that it is not culture-specific (“echar perlas a los cerdos” is, in fact, an expression widely used in Spain) and does not, as a consequence, involve a transgression of the source culture.

The proverb mentioned above constitutes an exception in *Tiempo de silencio* in that it appears in its original form: the vast majority of the proverbial expressions and clichés which appear in the novel are altered in one way or other:

a. By addition: “buscar cinco/tres pies al gato” becomes “[¿Para qué intentar] buscarle cuatro pies al gato madrileño?” (Ts: 273). The proverb would translate idiomatically into English as “splitting hairs”. In a case like this, the translator could also resort to addition in the target text, and render the original as “splitting Madrilean hairs”, for



example. Leeson's translation ("But why bother to explain all this to a Madrileño...?", TS: 228) reveals a lack of comprehension of the original meaning, which results in a distortion of the source-text meaning.

b. By negation: "los niños no vienen de París" (Ts: 274); "El que la hace no la paga. El que a hierro muere no a hierro mata. El que da primero no da dos veces." (Ts: 285). The examples quoted also call for some sort of communicative translation, prior to their transformation into negative sentences. Leeson, however, opted for a literal translation of these expressions ("children don't [sic] come from Paris", TS: 229; "The doer does not pay. He who dies by the sword does not kill with the sword. He who strikes first does not strike twice" TS: 238), even when similar English sayings could have been included in the target text: "children are not brought by storks", and "He who makes his bed does not have to lie in it. He who dies by the sword does not live by the sword. He who strikes first does not strike hardest", respectively.

c. By substitution: "la investigación bien vale un ratón" (Ts: 8) is modelled on "París bien vale una misa". Henry IV of France's historical quotation also has a British equivalent: "Paris is well worth a mass". Thus, the target text could read: "research is well worth a mouse", by imitation, instead of "our research is worth one mouse" (TS: 5), so that the connection with the original quotation is preserved in the target text.

Others appear in their original form followed by a paraphrasis which qualifies the original saying according to the author's (or Pedro's) views. This is the case of the biblical: "Ojo por ojo. Ojo de vidrio para rojo cuévano hueco. Diente por diente. Prótesis de oro y celuloide para el mellado abyecto." (Ts: 285). These would appear easier to translate, since all that is required is an elaboration of the well-known passage in the target text: "An eye for an eye. A glass eye for a red cavernous hollow. A tooth for a tooth. A gold or celluloid filling for the gap in the mouth." (TS: 238).

### *3. Intertextuality between the source and target texts*

A more general approach to intertextuality, in terms of the relation between the source and target texts, reveals a more complex issue. In addition to the "external" intertextual links within the target culture polysystem (see above), internal links between the two texts also have to be considered.



With regard to the relative position of the translations of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* in the respective target cultures, a safe presumption to make would be that the target texts will reach a smaller number of readers than the source texts will, possibly belonging to different social groups. As has been mentioned earlier (see p. 4), the relationship between authors and their readers is different from that between translators and theirs. The paragraphs below aim at explaining the reasons for this difference in the case of the two novelists concerned in this study.

In Great Britain, Martin Amis is a well-known literary figure--and a polemical one as well. He has as many admirers as he has detractors. The fame of his late father (Kingsley Amis) has, no doubt, added to his own. In Spain, however, his popularity is modest. His reputation as a member of the intellectual élite and as part of the South of England crowd of socialites, or his relations with critics, editors and other writers do not interfere with the reception of his works in Spanish translation. In Britain, on the other hand, these factors and their comparatively extensive coverage in the media, make many readers take a stand with respect to his novels, motivated by their adherence to or rejection of what Martin Amis seems to stand for in their country (middle-class values, the easy life of those who come from a privileged background<sup>117</sup>, as well as a certain misogynistic attitude and snobbery<sup>118</sup>).

Martín-Santos is widely regarded as a key figure in post-war Spanish literature. The fact that his only finished novel, *Tiempo de silencio*, deals with social, political and historical issues which are very sensitive from the point of view of his own culture has endowed his narrative with a long-lasting fame within Spain. The aftermath of the Spanish Civil War was a fascinating issue for intellectuals of the democratic world. This explains the translation boom which followed the publication of *Tiempo de silencio*. However, international interest in that era has waned with the passing of time. Possibly as a result of this, there have been no successful attempts to publish a new translation of the novel.

Another aspect that is worth mentioning is the fact that translated literature occupies a more prominent place in the Spanish-speaking world than it does in English-language

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<sup>117</sup>*The Sunday Correspondent*, 19 September 1989, heads a synopsis of Martin Amis's life and career as "Martin Amis: His struggle", following the results of a competition run by *The Observer* for readers to find the most unlikely combination of titles and authors. "My Struggle, by Martin Amis" was the winning entry.

<sup>118</sup>*Time Out*, 27 March 1981: "he [Martin Amis] has provoked widespread popular criticism on the grounds that: he's arrogant and complacent; he's misogynistic; [...] he'd walk a million miles for one of his own smiles and a million more to see that smile portrayed in the *Observer*."

countries. Venuti's assertion that "producing cultures in the United Kingdom and the United States [...] are aggressively monolingual, unreceptive to the foreign, accustomed to fluent translations that invisibly inscribe foreign texts with English-language values" (1995: 15) is justified by the sheer volume of works that are translated from English into other languages, as opposed to the comparatively low number of works that are translated into English (see tables in *ibid.*: 13-16). Venuti's premise appears to hold true in the case of the published translations of *Tiempo de silencio* and *London Fields*. Leeson certainly departed more from the source text in favour of the English-language norm than Moreno did in favour of the Spanish-language norm. On the other hand, pointers as to the foreign origin of the text (in the form of footnotes) are far more common in the case of former.

As has been shown, Leeson manipulated the original in such a way that not only were many of its stylistic characteristics altered, but also the physical distribution of the text on the page was changed. The central element in *Tiempo de silencio*, the irony which is the tenor of its criticism of the Spanish condition in his time, is often obscured in the target text, as a result of divergences in the form of the source and target texts. Thus, no distinct intertextual link exists between them in this respect. As far as the content of *Tiempo de silencio* is concerned, intertextuality is preserved to a greater extent, since the representation of thematic links (for instance, the Joycean overtones) is unavoidable in the target text, such are their prominence and their entrenchment in the plot.

In *Campos de Londres*, unlike in *London Fields*, content often takes precedence over matter, with the result that certain formal characteristics (rhyme, alliteration, etc.) become lost in translation. In spite of this, the target text is closely modelled on the stylistic characteristics of the source text. In fact, the translation of certain passages of *London Fields* by Moreno is so literal that it results in strange collocations ("Oh, es bonito salir a dar una vuelta" [CL: 319], for "Oh, it's nice to get out and about" [LF: 259])<sup>119</sup>, non-grammatical constructions ("Ella *nunca*" [CL: 136], for "She *never*" [LF: 107]), or meaningless expressions (as when Nicola exclaims: "Es tan *dulce*" [CL: 363], for "It's so *sweet*" [LF: 296], in reference to English taste in pornography). In other cases, the meaning conveyed by the original is distorted: Keith claims that he was "pensando en [s]us propios negocios" [CL: 378], when in fact he was minding his own business [LF: 308]. Similarly, Chapter 7 is entitled "Doing Real Good" in

<sup>119</sup> This example corroborates Venuti's postulate that "mistranslations, especially in literary texts, can be not merely intelligible but significant in the target-language culture." (1995: 18).

English, whereas Moreno's version reads: "Haciendo el bien de verdad"<sup>120</sup>. The most extreme case of failed literal translation is exemplified by the rendition of rhyming slang mentioned previously: "A four-wheel Sherman [...] Four-wheel = four-wheel skid = yid. Sherman = Sherman tank = yank" (LF: 81). Moreno's translation ("Un yanqui de cuatro ruedas [...] Cuatro ruedas = coche de cuatro ruedas = coche americano = americano = yanqui"; CL: 106) combines a strange collocation, lack of meaning and a distortion of the original content to a surreal effect.

Whereas Martín-Santos drew heavily on foreign models for the conceptual basis and stylistic presentation of his novel, Martin Amis relied mainly on English-language sources. As has been explained in the relevant sections, the influence of other authors in *London Fields* (in terms of both form and content) is rarely apparent from the target text, sometimes because of Moreno's choice of strategy, and others because the reference points are missing from the target culture. Likewise, some of the elements which underpin the main themes of the novel (the death of love, the absence of charity, the world crisis) are absent from the target text because they are inseparable from their linguistic expression (a pun on "love" as "zero" in the game of tennis, the names of characters, and baby talk, respectively). On the other hand, these themes are amply developed explicitly throughout the novel, which compensates for the absence of the formal components that reinforce them in the source text.

In the published translations of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* alike, genre intertextuality is maintained, as it is typically the case with the translation of modern novels. It could be argued, however, that whilst *Campos de Londres* works as a "whodunit" in Spanish, *Time of Silence* does not operate on the same level as *Tiempo de silencio*, merely because its audience is different. If we are to believe its author, the source text addressed its audience in a manner that the target text could not: through his criticism of Franco's regime, Martín-Santos wanted to move his readers towards a reflective attitude that would lead to change in social attitudes. Even though Martin Amis seems to appeal primarily to an English-language audience, he does not do so to the same extent as Martín-Santos meant to appeal to his contemporaries. The conative intent implicit in *Tiempo de silencio* does not inform *London Fields*.

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<sup>120</sup> Sometimes, the meaning is not only distorted, but reversed, as in "Guy Clinch no era fácil de manipular" (CL: 59), for "Guy Clinch was no sweat to pull" (LF: 40). Nevertheless, this type of occurrence cannot be attributed to a case of literal translation gone wrong, but rather to a misunderstanding of the original expression.

Postmodern fiction can be perceived as exclusionary, because of the emphasis placed on self-reference. Even though, of the two novels analysed here, only *London Fields* can be defined as a postmodern text, *Tiempo de silencio* shares some of the characteristics of this type of discourse (utilisation of form as meaning, linguistic self-reference, neologisms, etc.). The question arises of whether or not English postmodern fiction can be translated into Spanish, and *vice versa*. From a pragmatic point of view, the answer would have to be affirmative, since the works of postmodern authors have been translated into either language. The existence of the postmodern fiction subgenre in both literary polysystems ensures that English and Spanish-speakers alike will have a reference frame into which the translations of postmodern literature would fit. From the point of view of its translatability, aspects such as those examined in previous chapters (style, humour, proper names endowed with meaning, and so on) would have to be taken into consideration, alongside intertextuality.

A different angle from which the subject of intertextuality between an original and its translation can be approached is that which affects the relative status of authors and translators. Many translators and scholars have rightly attempted to subvert the notion that the translator stands in a position of inferiority with respect to the author. Robinson presents one of the more radical arguments against this traditional view. With reference to non-literary translation, he claims “that the image we have been given of the SL author sitting in wrathful judgement upon the humble translator who dares change the intended meaning of the SL text even slightly is often false.” (1991: 116). It is true that many authors of non-literary texts could perceive translators as more accomplished writers than themselves. However, Robinson maintains more provocatively that the same can be extended to literary translation: “if you keep at it you will eventually find yourself with very much the same kind of verbal authority as the awesome classical SL author him- or herself.” (ibid.: 117).

In the specific instances of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, it would seem fair to say that their translators did not achieve “the same kind of verbal authority” as their authors did, which is not to say that the target texts are without merit. However, they are devoid, to an extent, of the rich subtexts and nuances which pervade both originals. Leeson and Moreno might have misread the importance of some elements in the source texts (for example, the role of syntax and the layout of *Tiempo de silencio*, and the significance of baby talk in *London Fields*), but they often made effective use of whatever strategies were available given the characteristics of specific components



of the text. The breaches in intertextuality between the respective source and target texts can be perceived as being the direct result of the formal configuration of the former, on the one hand, and of their close links with the source culture. The translator of a novel not only has to convey the meaning of the original in a manner that befits literary conventions, but also to present the target-culture readers with a product of an alien cultural system. The “otherness” of the source text is grounded in the knowledge and values which are shared by its author and its readers. As soon as these parameters (communicator, recipient and context) change, as they are bound to do in translation, the translator can still *translate* the source text, but its implicit background (which can, of course, be *explained*) remains in the territory of the Other.

#### 4. Summary

“There are [...] texts [...] where the style and the thematic content together form an indissoluble whole. In such cases, translation cannot do full justice to the source text without trying to recreate the innovative nature of the source text.” (Hervey *et al.*, 1995: 80). These words refer to the difficulty in formulating innovative target texts to match innovative source texts (i.e. to maintain the intertextuality between them), since the first consideration as far as intertextuality is concerned is given by the position that a new text occupies in relation to other texts. This reflection is particularly relevant in the case of *Tiempo de silencio* (a text which is used as an example of some translatability problems within that same work, *Thinking Spanish Translation*), and also in the case of *London Fields*, given the nature of both novels.

Martín-Santos wanted to rejuvenate the Spanish novel in the early 1960’s<sup>121</sup>, whereas Martin Amis aims at producing a new, distinctive style of novel in the 1980’s. Although the relative perception by contemporary readers of the innovation that *Tiempo de silencio* and *London Fields* respectively represent will be different, this does not matter from the translators’ point of view, since the publication of the translations of these two novels followed closely in time that of the originals.

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<sup>121</sup>The author’s own words, regarding the Spanish novel of his time, are very illuminating as to his literary stand: “En España hay una escuela realista, un tanto pedestre y comprometida, que es la que da el tono. Tendrá que alcanzar un mayor contenido y complejidad si quiere escapar a una repetición monótona y sin interés.” (in Winecoff-Díaz, 1968: 237).



However, no matter how innovative a text may be, it will inevitably be linked to other texts which have preceded it in time. These links may be of an explicit nature (in which case they would assume the form of references, allusions, quotations, etc.) or implicit (every text is part of a literary system, against which it should be compared, in terms of continuation, opposition, or simply innovation).

A differentiation should be established between the translation problems which intertextuality may cause:

- a. Those which arise from the intertextual occurrence itself. The linguistic form of the occurrence may be difficult to reproduce in the target text.
- b. Those which arise from the links established between the intertextual occurrence and the source text (for instance, if the intertextual occurrence is relevant to the plot).
- c. Those which arise from intertextual occurrences which are specific to the source culture, or have come to form part of it. The occurrences which are alien to the target culture may not be easily understood by target-text readers.

These categories are not mutually exclusive. It is conceivable that an intertextual occurrence which is difficult to translate in itself has also links with the plot of the text of which it is a part, for example.

As far as the first category is concerned, the translation problems that may arise, i.e. the reproduction of linguistic features, may be compensated in the target text according to one strategy or another (see Hervey *et al.*, 1995: 27-32).

The case of the other two categories is a more complex one. For example, if an intertextual occurrence which is linked to the plot of the source text is compensated in the target text, the elements which constitute the link may be lost in translation. On the other hand, even if no compensation strategy is required, the intertextual link may not be recognised as being such in translation.

This can also be applied to the third category. There may be two reasons for this predicament:

**a.** The intertextual link is lost because the source culture text which is cross-referenced is not well-known in the target culture. It is, however, a fair assumption that intertextual links with texts which have the category of classics (for instance, Cervantes' in the Spanish-speaking world, or Shakespeare's in the English-speaking world) will be recognisable in a foreign cultural context (within reason), even though the originals themselves are not extensively read in this context. The reason for this can be that the original, "classic", texts are diffused through popular media (cinema, television), or because certain passages or episodes have become clichés and part of universal culture.

**b.** The intertextual link is lost because it may be difficult for target-text readers to establish a comparison between the source culture text occurrence which is being cross-referenced and the form it adopts in translation. This would be the case, for example, of an imitation of the style of a given author or genre in the source text. For target-text readers who have no access to the original with which the link is established (and it would have to be assumed that they are a majority), the comparison between the translation of the imitative style and the original mentioned above will be difficult to recognise or identify.

Reference has been made to source culture texts (whether proper or assimilated) since the situation changes when the intertextual link is established with a text which belongs to a cultural frame other than the source culture. If this is the case, again, two possible cases arise:

**a.** The intertextual link is established with a text which belongs to a cultural frame alien both to the source culture and the target culture. This kind of link would lie in neutral territory, so to speak, and their recognition should be as easy or as difficult for target-text readers as it would be for source-text readers.

**b.** The intertextual link is established with a text which belongs to the target culture (whether strictly or through assimilation). It is likely that this kind of link would be more easily identified by target-text readers than by source-text readers.

A very important aspect has therefore to be taken into account when approaching the issue of intertextuality, along with that of the form of the intertextual occurrence itself: the perception of the target text by its readers. Although, as mentioned above,

intertextuality can play in their favour, more often than not it may be an obstacle for the understanding of the text.

There is not much that a translator can do to alleviate this situation, short of including marginal notes clarifying the intertextual links. The pertinence of such clarifications, as mentioned elsewhere depends on the status of the target text, in relation to its readership. According to this, such translator's "intrusions" would be more welcome by the readers of *Tiempo de silencio* in translation than by those of a translated version of *London Fields*. The reason for this would be that the former are likely to approach the target text as a modern classic, or by virtue of its historical importance, whereas the later probably approach it as a contemporary best-seller, whose literary importance is lesser. Of course, this may change with the years, but at present, it would be unwise to venture any conjectures in this respect.

As a conclusion, it is worth remarking that intertextuality is a fundamental consideration in the analysis of a literary piece prior to its translation. What has been expounded above seems to prove that *London Fields* is both thematically and formally linked to other works of world literature and, especially, of literature in the English language. Such links are very important in the source text and, consequently, should be reproduced or compensated for in the target text as far as possible. As J.L.Lemke explains: "We make meanings through the relations, and the non-relations, of texts and actions that reach to the highest orders of contextualization, the 'deepest' patterns of our social system of action and meaning" (1985: 293). Those "meanings", which present an abstract character, can be as essential in a text as words themselves, as the "concrete" elements of the discourse.

## Chapter 7: Culture-specific references

### 1. Introduction

The notion of “otherness” has become a focus of interest in contemporary translation studies. The application of this concept, and that of “de-centring” to modern translation theory is derived from sociological discourse. Even though these concepts are usually associated with post-modernity and the era of globalisation in the late twentieth century, they have been formally addressed in terms of social theory and human sciences since the mid-nineteenth century: Marxist thinking (revisited in the 1960’s) is the first major de-centring effort of the Enlightenment conception of identity.

The main concern here is how scholars exploit the notion of “the Other” in a literary text with regard to translation, where, as Berman says: “The native strangeness of the work is joined by its strangeness (effectively increased) in the foreign language.” (1992: 127). However, some translators erode that strangeness, consciously or subconsciously, in order to present their readers with naturalness of expression and enhance comprehensibility, and, as a result, denunciations of suppression and repression of “the Other” have been rife. Assimilation of the source text to the target culture can be traced back to the Romans, and their translations of the Greek classics. However, this act of imperialistic appropriation could be seen as revolutionary in certain cases, such as in Ælfric’s translation of the *Lives of the Saints*, in the Middle Ages, when he defies conventions and the established order of things (see Robinson, 1998: 108). Ælfric followed a target-audience oriented approach when rendering the original text, which made it easier to apprehend. In doing so, he departed from the traditional approach, which ruled closeness to the original.

Venuti shows in *The Translator’s Invisibility* (1995) how translation can control otherness both from an aesthetic and a cultural point of view. His evidence appears to contradict the widespread notion of what, ideally, translation should be: “The essence of translation is to be an opening, a dialogue, a cross-breeding, a decentering. Translation is a ‘putting in touch with’ or it is *nothing*.” (Berman 1992: 4). The reason for the divergence between what a translation *should be* and what it often *becomes* in actual fact lies in the resistance to translation which, for some, characterises all societies:

Every culture resists translation, even if it has an essential need for it. The very aim of translation – to open up in writing a certain relation with the Other, to fertilize what is One's own through the mediation of what is Foreign – is diametrically opposed to the ethnocentric structure of every culture, that species of narcissism by which every society wants to be a pure and unadulterated Whole. There is a tinge of the violence of cross-breeding in translation.” (Berman 1992: 4)

Berman refers to cross-breeding as “violent”, but it could well be (and it often is) a voluntary act, one that is conducive to an enrichment of both the self and the other, one that results in a whole that is much larger than the sum of its parts. However, terms such as “violence” and “aggression” are not uncommon amongst the critics who have been working in the field of post-colonialism and gender studies, who point to the existence of power relations that are inherent in the act of translation from one culture to another.

Otherness can be, and often is, alluring. Making ethnicity saleable can be a very profitable business. As a result, it lends itself to being falsified, to becoming distorted in order to conform to alien perceptions (as is the case with the slanted translations of Tagore's writings, widely studied by post-colonial scholars)<sup>122</sup>. This is another factor that helps understand why some critics understand translation in terms of a power relation: “The writings of Rafael, Bhabha, Niranjana and Cheyfitz in particular seek to articulate ‘translation’ as a central problematic in the analysis of ethnic and cultural transfers, refusing the traditional Enlightenment position of understanding the ‘Other’ but trying instead to think through what Cheyfitz terms ‘the difficult politics of translation, rather than the politics of translation that represses this difficult politics.’” (Evans, 1998: 149).

It is important to point out that some scholars working in this field use the term “translation” in its etymological sense: “Others accept that identity is subject to the play of history, politics, representation and difference, so that they are unlikely ever again to be unitary or ‘pure’; and these consequently gravitate towards what Robins

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<sup>122</sup> Martín-Santos, on the other hand, distorted his prose following foreign models not in order to make himself accessible in other languages, but rather the opposite: he did it so that the readers of the source-text could grasp his criticism of Spanish society on the basis of formal components, since the possibility of deploying more explicit mechanisms (i.e. content-based ones) was ruled out by the existence of censorship in Franco's era.



(following Homi Bhabha) calls 'Translation'<sup>123</sup> (Hall 1992: 309). Simon articulates the reason why Bhabha's notion of translation differs from the most commonly accepted meaning of the concept in the following terms: "Translation is not a mechanism of transfer or a naturalisation of meaning, because the extremes of Otherness have collapsed into the ever-growing center between them." (1996: 153).

Indeed, Bhabha's approach differs from that of scholars like Even Zohar or Toury, who also take power relations between cultures as a starting point, in that he does not deal with translations and their role in a given culture *per se*, but rather with the articulation of cultures in other languages. This is possible because a feature which all cultures share is that they are "symbol forming"<sup>124</sup> and subject-constituting, interpellative practices" (1990: 209-10), despite the differences which exist as far as their contents are concerned: cultural values and priorities are characterised by their "incommensurability" (Bhabha 1994: 173). For Bhabha, it is displacement (for he defines culture as being translational, as well as transnational [see 1994: 172]) which 'opens up the possibility of articulating different, even incommensurable, cultural practices and priorities' (1990: 210-11)".

Bhabha claims that the processes of displacement and transformation within and across cultures produce "the third space" (see Bhabha 1990), which Evans defines as: "an identification, rather than an identity, where there can never be a full translation of subjects or of forms of culture, but which is hybrid and which bears, like a translation, traces of former meanings that give rise to new areas of negotiation of meaning and representation, but never in an essentialized form." (1998: 152).

If Bhabha derives from Benjamin the concept of culture as a symbolic (signifying) activity, deconstructionist theory drew upon *The Task of the Translator* in order to add a new dimension to the relationship between the source and target texts. In deconstructionist terms, the debate is no longer restricted to whether naturalising translation is a "betrayal" of the Other. Instead, for the deconstructionists, source-text oriented translation strategies lead to a surrender to the Other, which is to be avoided:

This concept [*Nachträglichkeit*, i.e. 'post-humous-ness'] can [...] be seen as a motivation for ideologically interfering with the

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<sup>123</sup> Hall defines "translation" in this sense as that which "describes those identity formations which cut across and intersect natural frontiers, and which are composed of people who have been dispersed forever from their homelands." (ibid.: 310).

<sup>124</sup> This notion can be traced back to Benjamin's "The Task of the Translator".

original, on the grounds that new richness is being added to the work: if original meaning does not exist and if the work lives on in the endlessly deferred meaning of the play of the signifier, then various forms of adaptation become justified as the main translation technique. Gender politics lead to the same conclusion. In these circumstances, translation becomes not a submission to otherness, but a performance art with procedures exactly comparable to those used in modern-day stagings of classical theatre and opera.” (Robinson 1998: 107)

Thus, the limits of what is commonly understood as translation are expanded: it is no longer a transmission of the original meaning (since there is no such thing), nor of forms (which are no longer perceived as being the carriers of the inexistent meaning). It becomes a boundless activity in which translators are no longer re-creators, but creators of their own right.

As the quotation above indicates, this approach has also influenced feminist translators<sup>125</sup>. Several prominent figures within this field (such as Barbara Goddard) have written about the implications of gender politics in translation. As Chamberlain states, quoting Maier (1985: 4), “Feminist translators have [...] advocated a translation of resistance that gives voice to the antagonist works but also ‘speak[s] with them and place[s] them in a larger context’” (1998: 96). Maybe because of its provocative approach, feminist translation has encountered opposition on several fronts, but it is perhaps unexpected that, as Simon remarks, “one of the most cogent critiques of feminist translation has come from the point of view of radical deconstructionism.” (1996: 29). Simon goes on to outline the objections put forward by Rosemary Arrojo, who sees the idealism of feminist translation as “a reverse image of masculinist configurations” (ibid.):

She wonders what makes a ‘feminist translator’s affirmation of her delight in interminable re-reading and re-writing’ the text something positive and desirable, whereas Steiner’s “masculine” model is merely “violent” and “appropriative” (Arrojo 1995: 73). Why is a masculinist interpretive model a betrayal while a feminist one is enriching? [...] Arrojo suggests that “otherness” cannot only be projected onto the practices of those we reject but recognised as it faces us “in our own territory”. (ibid.)

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<sup>125</sup> For an elaboration on “The metaphors of gender in modern translation studies”, see Chamberlain 1998, pp. 95-6.

Yet feminist critique is not limited to “the antagonistic works” (to quote Chamberlain) that are being translated: it reaches out to the extra-textual context in which translators operate and the social perceptions of their status. The following excerpt from Suzanne Jill Levine’s *The Subversive Scribe* (1991), encapsulates the premises which underpin feminist translators’ rejection of what is perceived as being the *status quo* in the profession:

The translator is secondary, enslaved, nay raped by another’s words; the translator does not belong to himself but is alienated from his own language; the author creates himself, the translator remains secret. The translator is only a voice of passage. The translator is female, even if she is sometimes a male (op. cit.: 184)

Levine’s use of a metaphor of gender relations in this context is open to debate, for one could object to an equation between female identity and the notions of inferiority, subservience and alienation, even when this equation is denounced by the author. However, there is no disputing her basic contention that translators have traditionally been regarded as subservient to the author.<sup>126</sup>

In *The Subversive Scribe*, Levine reflects on her experiences as a translator of contemporary Latin American fiction by male authors. It echoes Benjamin’s conception of the source text as a link in a long chain of referents and signifiers, a chain of which translation is another link. Levine uses this conception to argue for a long-delayed recognition of the figure of the translator in contemporary society:

If somehow we learn to de-sex the original vis-à-vis its translation, particularly in our postmodern age, when originality has been all but exhausted, if we recognise the borderlessness or at least continuity between translation and original, then perhaps we can begin to see the translator in another light, no longer bearing the stigma of servant, of handmaiden. Translation, saddling [sic] the scholarly and the creative, can be a route through which a writer/translator may seek to reconcile fragments: fragments of texts, of language, of oneself. From a readerly perspective, translation is an act of interpretation, from a writerly one (from this now visible invisible scribe), it has been a (w)rite of passage.” (op.cit.: 184)

However, at one point Levine justifies what she calls “taking liberties” with the text by explaining that “the seed of these liberties lies in the original itself.” (ibid.: 80-1).

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<sup>126</sup> Established writers could be considered an exception: not many would suggest that Baudelaire was raped by Poe’s words, or Pound by Homer’s, nor that theirs are voices of passage.

Thus, Levine appears not to depart from the notion of the “original text” (disputed by the deconstructionists), nor even from the equivalent-effect principle: for her, “a good translation [...] aims to (re)produce an effect, to persuade a reader” (ibid.: 3). *The Subversive Scribe* appears to sway from the traditional to the (post)modern: on the one hand, Levine subscribes to conventional notions, (translation as betrayal [ibid.: 34] and the pursuit of equivalence, both cultural [ibid.: 27] and functional, [ibid.: 168], for example); on the other, she alludes to the concepts of displacement, [ibid. 171 ff.] and otherness, [ibid.: 16, 181].

The flexibility in Levine’s approach is highly desirable in the practice of translation, where decisions are made on the basis of specific contexts. This allows a space for the translator to exercise judgement, to interpret and make decisions regarding the negotiation of meaning (see p. 211) from the source text to the target text. This would explain Levine’s “yes and no” explanations sometimes, which are based on a matter of subjectivity<sup>127</sup>:

... if Puig’s works question the alienating effects of North American cultural imperialism, doesn’t the translation mitigate this criticism by stressing that culture at the expense of indigenous Latin American cultural phenomena? Yes and no. Yes, the target culture does to a certain extent censor the ideology of the source text; an ideological subversion occurs by the mere fact of rewriting – appropriating – an Argentine novel in American English. Translation is a form of conquest [...]. But the other side of the coin is, if the reader cannot recognize *Boquitas*’ parodical effect, its ideology is suppressed even more radically. (ibid.: 128-29)

This is the type of situation that signals the presence of untranslatability, as understood for the purposes of this study: that which occurs every time that the translator is confronted with a “yes and no” situation, to follow Levine, and, in order to make translation possible, an element (formal and/or content-related) which is essential in the original has to be “sacrificed” (a verb also used by Levine) in the target text. In other words, the translator has to exercise judgement as to the extent to which the otherness of the source text can be translated into the target text.

The strategy that Levine refers to in the quotation above was applied because in the original *Boquitas pintadas*, quotations of tango lyrics appear as epigraphs at the head of every episode. On at least half of the occasions Levine “translates” them by

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<sup>127</sup> After all, as Levine herself admits: “In all honesty, I can only speak from my own experience...” (ibid.: 167).

replacing them “with either tag lines from Hollywood films or Argentine radio commercials [in English]” (ibid.: 127). She claims: “it would have been absurd to substitute Billie Holiday’s singing for Libertad Lamarque’s, or Cole Porter’s lyrics for Alfred Le Pera’s. The original cultural referent would have been completely erased by such a drastic transposition.” (ibid.). However, this strategy involves a compromise, and one that is made with American readers in mind: “By substituting movie tag lines for tangos we changed the medium but sustained the message, the function that the original tangos had served for the reader.” (ibid.: 168). The message is sustained at the expense of the foreignness of the text (even though Levine declares herself a supporter of Venuti’s approach to translation). Could the American readership not be expected to accept the message as it was designed for the source-text readers, to de-centre themselves and move towards “the Other”? Yet, given the strains that translators often work under (publishers’ briefs and other constrictions), the chosen solution to the inherent untranslatability of cultural references is probably the most appropriate. This could serve to illustrate the argument proposed here: that translatability and untranslatability lie within the source text and that compromises and compensation are required in order for a target text to be viable. That is, untranslatability does not preclude translation, since the former is a quality of the original and the latter manifests itself in the target text, in the space which is provided by the negotiable otherness of the source text.

Post-colonial and gender politics in translation are fields of study which, a such, fall outwith the remit of this thesis. Their applicability to the specific texts that are being dealt with here (*London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*) would appear more limited than in the case of other literary works. The most prominent inequalities in power relations take place in the context of the dichotomy to which sociologists refer as “the West” and “the Rest”. Britain and Spain have never co-existed in a colonial relationship. In fact, English-language imperialism over Spanish culture is more likely to come from across the Atlantic. Both Britain and Spain have well-established literary traditions and yet translations tend to occupy a more peripheral position (to use Even-Zohar’s terminology) in the former than they do in the latter. Spanish texts which are translated in Spanish appeal to a select audience, while English narrative translated into Spanish is widely read, often as popular fiction, and *Tiempo de silencio* and *London Fields* illustrate this trend. It is also worth mentioning that, whereas in Spain the anglo-saxon world has always been thought of as more advanced<sup>128</sup>, British

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<sup>128</sup> It is worth remembering that this is one of the main themes in *Tiempo de silencio*.



perceptions of Spain tend to be based on notions of primitivism and underdevelopment<sup>129</sup> (especially until the late 1970's, but still prevailing amongst certain sectors of the population). Additionally, English, as a global language, occupies a superior position to that occupied by Spanish. As demonstrated by some examples in the following sections, these different perceptions matter in translation, not necessarily because of the translator's strategy, but because of the target-text readers' interpretation. The second approach quoted above (gender politics) would only apply from a hypothetical point of view, given that the published translators of the two novels studied here are both male, and their texts do not reveal any attempt to subvert the views of the also male authors. If a female translator were to be involved, the strategies which she would adopt would require a separate study.

Regardless of what has been said above, the contribution of scholars working in the field of post-colonial and gender studies is essential in an approach to the translatability of texts, since they place otherness in a wider ideological context than that provided by more traditional theories: they draw attention to the fact that translation is a portrayal of the Other. Thus, untranslatability would be the site of irreducible otherness. However, as shown above, different strategies are available in order to articulate otherness, to translate elements that present a cultural bias, if we take the source text as the starting point that presents the translator with a series of options, which will be based on his or her interpretation. Translators have followed such strategies since time immemorial. However, attempts to categorise them are characteristic of modern translation theory. Hervey and Higgins (1995: 20-27) provide a list of five methods:

- **exoticism:** a source language item appears verbatim in the target text.
- **cultural borrowing:** a source language item and the concept or idea which it designates are so popular in the target culture that such an item always appears in its original form.
- **calque:** literal translation of the original item.
- **communicative translation:** target culture items are substituted for source text elements which have the same role.
- **cultural transposition:** target culture elements are substituted which have similar connotations to the original elements.

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<sup>129</sup>This is also the case with the USA, on the one hand, and Latin America, on the other.

This classification is organised as a scale according to the bias of the translation process, i.e. between the poles of source text-oriented translation and target text-oriented translation. Thus, exoticism is the strategy which makes more concessions to the source text and, by implication, to the source culture, whereas cultural transposition is the strategy which is most oriented towards the target text and the target culture.

In the light of the classification above, the strategies which can be adopted with respect to the translation of culture-bound terms can be summarised in three alternative ways:

**a.** The source text element can be introduced in the target text without variation. This strategy, exoticism, has the advantage of preserving the local colour of the source culture, and the disadvantage of potentially obscuring the understanding of the element in question in the target text. The element will stand out in the target text as an alien presence, whose meaning can be clarified within the text itself or in a marginal note. This is the case of all the words in Inuit/Greenlander which have been included in David's translation of Peter Høeg's *Miss Smilla's Feeling for Snow* (London: Harvill, 1993, and Flamingo: 1994), which emphasise the identity of a social minority (that of the main character) within the novel.

This strategy can work well at a localised level, but its applicability on a textual or supratextual level (e.g. for features such as humour or stylistic characteristics) is less feasible, since it would threaten the comprehensibility of the text.

**b.** The foreign word(s) are not inserted in the target text, but the semantic content of the element is elaborated upon, so that it becomes comprehensible to the target readership. This strategy has the advantage of presenting the semanticity of the source text in a natural and understandable way, without distracting the attention of the readers. On the other hand, it presupposes the introduction of elements which are not present in the original and, as a result, it could potentially affect the style or rhythm of a passage, as well as involving a loss of the source culture "flavour".

As in the previous case, this strategy would work better when applied to specific occurrences, rather than general features.

**c.** Target culture elements which perform a similar function to the original can be inserted in the target text. That is, the translator would have to find linguistic elements

which have the same meaning, the same connotations and/or the same function in the target culture as the source text element have in the source culture. The equivalence principle is a very polemic one within translation theory, and opting for this strategy is a hazardous choice. Naturalness of expression and comprehensibility are guaranteed, but at the cost of a certain disfiguration of the source text, which would thus be perceived as a target culture product to a greater or lesser degree. Also, access to the peculiarities of the source culture is denied, in this way, to the readers of the target text.

This strategy could work well at a global level. For instance, features which are characteristic of humorous expression in the target culture can be substituted for features which are characteristic of humorous expression in the source culture, alliteration can replace rhyme in the translation of a poem if that is the habitual marker of poetic texts in the target language, etc. Texts which are the result of a total cultural transplantation, such as Steve Martin's adaptation for the screen of Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*, *Roxanne* (Fred Schepisi, 1987), fall within this category. In the case of Martin's screenplay, the transplantation involves a geographical dimension, as well as a chronological one, into 1980's America.

The first of the strategies listed above is an example of source text/source culture-oriented translation, whereas the last two are target text/target culture-oriented translation procedures. Translators will have to decide between them according to factors such as the characteristics of the original, editorial requirements and target readership, and several of these strategies can be applied at different points within one text. If translators are given the freedom of choosing the bias of the target text, they may decide to make an ideological stand and opt for the translation procedure which best suits their own personal beliefs.

A translated text can be elaborated in such a way that it is perceived by the readers as a product which belongs to their own cultural context. This may favour the comprehensibility of the text, but prevents the readers from obtaining any information about the source culture through it. On the other hand, a target text which preserves the linguistic and cultural peculiarities of the source culture constitutes a good means of acquiring a knowledge of the source culture, but it may sacrifice immediate comprehensibility for an exotic (in the sense of foreign), "authentic" halo.

The factors affecting the relationship between the source and target cultures<sup>130</sup> also have to be considered in relation to the bias of the translations. As explained in the Introduction, Venuti has argued that “insofar as foreignizing translation seeks to restrain the ethnocentric violence of translation, it is highly desirable today, a strategic cultural intervention in the current state of world affairs” (1995: 20). Although he refers specifically to the cultural imperialism of English-speaking countries (he mentions “the hegemonic English-language nations and the unequal cultural exchanges in which they engage their global others” [ibid.]), foreignising translation is a strategy applicable to any given pair of languages.

This strategy is repudiated by many translators and translation scholars (e.g. Nida, Snell-Hornby<sup>131</sup>). However, others have called attention to the perils of a naturalising translation. Niranjana, for instance, accuses Translation Studies of ignoring “not just the power relations informing translation but also the historicity or effective history of translated texts” (1992: 59). Nevertheless, Bassnett-McGuire and Lefevere wrote in the General Editor’s Preface to the Translation Studies series, published by Routledge:

Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting is manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and in its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and a society. Rewritings can introduce new concepts, new genres, new devices, and the history of translation is the history also of literary innovation, of the shaping power of one culture upon another. But rewriting can also repress innovation, distort and contain, and in an age of increasing manipulation of all kinds, the study of the manipulative processes of literature as exemplified by translation can help us towards a greater awareness of the world in which we live. (see, e.g., Gentzler, 1993: ix).

Theo Hermans, indeed, edited a collection of essays on translation under the title *The Manipulation of Literature* (1985). These examples tend to suggest a greater awareness of the issue than Niranjana’s words imply.

A foreignising translation would be less “imperialistic” than a naturalising translation and it would be less transgressive of source culture and source language conventions. However, such a translation would be more transgressive of target language, and

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<sup>130</sup> Cf. Polysystem Theory (see pp. 28-29).

<sup>131</sup> They both spoke against “foreignising” translation at the International Conference on Translation *Transferte Necesses Est*, held in Budapest in September 1996.

maybe target culture conventions (as in the case of supratextual elements, such as humour). It seems that what von Humboldt presented as an “impossible task” in 1796 (see p. 33), i.e. finding a compromise between faithfulness to the original and deference towards the translator’s “nation”, still remains a problematic issue over two centuries later.

The nature of the text involved is an important consideration when deciding which orientation should be given to the translation. Linked to this issue is the readers’ approach to the target text, and their expectations. Those who seek mere escapism will not be interested in having their reading encumbered by elements which are perceived as alien, whose meaning is difficult to grasp. However, it has to be borne in mind that literature is an apt and accessible medium through which the dissemination of knowledge of other cultures can be achieved (see, however, p. 216).

Keeping a balance between a sensibility towards the source text and a commitment to the target text, between what Hatim and Mason (1990: 16-19) call “Author-centred and Reader-centred Translating” is difficult, to say the least. Translators have to reconcile the foreignness, the otherness, of the source text, on the one hand, and the orientation of the target text towards a potential readership which belongs to a different cultural context, on the other. This dilemma may be interpreted as a regression to the age-old debate between fidelity to the original and comprehensibility and naturalness of the translation, but, as the developments in translation theory which have taken place in the second half of the twentieth century illustrate, it is far more complex than that.

As has been shown in the previous chapters, the literary translator is confronted with issues that go beyond the difficulties that the text may present at a linguistic level. It seems unquestionable that translation is an articulation of “otherness”. Otherness can manifest itself in the formal characteristics of a literary genre or sub-genre. In the case of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, however, otherness is more likely to appear on the level of content, since both texts are novels, a literary form well established in Spanish and in English, and one with which readers in both cultures will be familiar. Culture-bound elements figure prominently in these two texts, since they emphasise specific geographical and chronological contexts. These elements may fall into one of three broad categories:



- a. Culture-specific terms or concepts, i.e. terms or concepts which belong specifically to a given cultural context and are therefore alien to other cultural contexts (or, at least to the target cultural context in each case).
- b. Terms or concepts which are not necessarily specific to the source culture, but have been introduced in it and have become assimilated.
- c. Terms or concepts which present connotations specific to the source culture, although they are not specific to it in themselves.

Their presence in the source text raises the question of how to reproduce them in the target text, how to make them understandable to a foreign audience. Should the culture of origin be “de-centred”, and “the other” displaced towards the target culture? Or should the readers of the target text “de-centre” themselves, and move towards “the Other”? Translation is always a portrayal of the Other, as expressed in the source text and interpreted by the translator. The expression in the target text of the components that signal this otherness can be, as explained above, tinted by the translator’s perception and ideological bias. Even when the translator’s choice is to reflect the foreignness of the text by maintaining the links that culturally-marked elements establish with the source culture, the options available cannot always help attain that goal. It seems beyond all doubt that certain textual components of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* pose translatability problems, not only by virtue of their linguistic nature or configuration<sup>132</sup>, but also by virtue of their relationship with their respective source cultures. Isolated linguistic elements which are culturally marked, such as words and expressions, do not generally pose major translatability problems. However, when we move to the level of textual and supra-textual elements, and their connections with the plot or the message of a literary work, the matter becomes a more complex one. Amongst the array of culture-bound elements introduced in both novels, some are so ubiquitous that they act as a sub-text: darts, tower blocks, and pub culture in *London Fields* and bullfighting, the shanties and the boarding house in *Tiempo de silencio*.

Thus, a basic differentiation should be made between isolated occurrences, whose appearance could be considered as anecdotal or merely illustrative, and those

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<sup>132</sup>For example, the translatability difficulties that certain textual elements, such as puns and other instances of word-play, pose apparently because of their linguistic configuration are closely linked to cultural factors, like the appreciation of humour, which differs greatly across cultures.

components of the text which identify it, in a sustained manner, as a foreign product, and which, therefore, signal the otherness of the source. As seen above, translators can adopt different stands with regard to the portrayal of otherness in the target text. What follows is an illustration of manifestations of nativeness in *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, the difficulties that they pose from the point of view of translation and the strategies that Moreno and Leeson utilised in order to present them in the target text.

## 2. Culturally-marked terms

It is worth noting that in the specific instance of the translation of *London Fields* into Spanish, some culturally-marked terms do not need clarification, for the Spanish readers will be familiar enough with them. Some elements belong to cultural contexts other than the British one, such as "Hermitage"<sup>133</sup> (LF: 88), or "Kristallnacht"<sup>134</sup> (LF: 273), and can be inserted *verbatim* in the target text. In the case of "Guernica" (LF: 153), target-text readers will even have an advantage with respect to source-text readers, since this painting (and the historical event it portrays) are part of the target culture.

Similarly, some of the elements which appear in *Tiempo de silencio* and have a cultural mark do not present problems when translated into English. Many readers of the target text will be familiar with the events which shook Spain in the decades of the 1930's and 1940's: a democratically elected republican regime was overthrown in 1936 by the outbreak of a civil conflict, whose ending in 1939 gave way to a period of economical and social crisis. Thus, the mention of the Republic (Ts: 71) and the Civil War (Ts: 72, 98) should be easily recognisable in the target text. However, the connotations of loaded allusions may be different, as will be expounded later.

As mentioned above, a number of strategies are available to the translator in order to express in the target language source-text terms and expressions which bear a cultural mark. The list of examples included below is intended for illustrative purposes and, therefore, is not exhaustive, given the high number of culture-bound terms which appear in *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*.

<sup>133</sup>The famous art museum in St. Petersburg.

<sup>134</sup>An allusion to the night when the Nazis assaulted the Jewish quarters in Berlin and other German cities, breaking the windows of the houses.

**Exoticism** is favoured when the source-text term is, in itself, foreign to the source culture: “poppadams” (LF: 50, CL: 78), “sushi” (LF: 107, CL: 136), etc. Sometimes, the exoticism can be transliterated: “vindaloo” (LF: 56) - “vindalú” (CL: 78). This strategy also tends to be chosen when the source-text term designates an item which does not exist in the target culture. This is the case of “churro” (Ts: 113; TS: 92), “porras” (ibid.) and “horchata” (Ts: 278; TS: 232).

In the case of the trademarks unknown in the target culture which are mentioned in the source text, when contextual information does not help clarify the nature of the trademark involved, an explanation of the nature of the product could be inserted in the target text<sup>135</sup>. Thus: “Milford Flapjacks” (LF: 166) could become “galletas Milford” (or “tortas Milford”, CL: 166); “Shreddies” (LF: 311), “cereales Shreddies” (or “cereales energéticos”, CL: 380); and “Lucozade”, (LF: 111) “bebida glucosada Lucozade”<sup>136</sup>.

In *Tiempo de silencio*, most trademarks appear disguised as common names: “veterano” (Ts: 92, which would require the introduction in the target text of an explanatory term, such as “Veterano Brandy”, TS: 75), “el turmix” (Ts: 158), “anís del mono” (Ts: 186), “cerveza mahou” (Ts: 278); and so on. Leeson, however, chose to capitalise all of them. As a result, they stand out in the target text, whereas they are “camouflaged” in the source-text lexical and syntactical tangle. One that recurs throughout the text is “rhum negrita” (Ts: 25...). This is the widow’s favourite tipple, which adds a comical dimension to the meaning of the trademark, “young/little black woman”, since her late husband was partial to the company of such women. The potential translation loss of using exoticism is greater in this case, however, due to the connections that it has with the plot.

In other instances, the trademark is signalled as such in the source text: “rebanadas de pan tostado con mantequilla Arias” (Ts: 263, this brand of butter being the most prestigious and best-known on the Spanish market). The inclusion of the trademark seems designed to emphasise the high status of the brand, and thus the introduction of a qualifier in the target text would seem justified (such as “best butter”, for example).

<sup>135</sup> The mere inclusion of a trademark as an exoticism can lead to losses additional to those derived from lack of familiarity. Moreno’s decision to apply this strategy to a fictitious trademark, “Celmate” (LF: 336, CL: 410), which is a mimicry of the registered “Cellnet”, and phonetically identical to “cell mate”, resulted in the loss of the original’s comic effect in the target text.

<sup>136</sup> Moreno judged it necessary to include a footnote (“Especie de gaseosa con glucosa”, CL: 142) in the case of the last trade-mark.

Otherwise, the implication may become lost, as it does in Leeson's translation ("slices of buttered toast", TS: 219).

It has to be borne in mind that the inclusion of exoticisms in the target text may impair comprehensibility. This is the case with Moreno's solution to the problem posed by "offie" (LF: 370). A rendition such as "Offie" (CL: 451) does not appear to be satisfactory. On the other hand, to translate this colloquial abbreviation as "licorería", whose semantic content is roughly equivalent to that of the English term is not a very appropriate strategy, since the word has a series of connotations (specialisation, old age, and, to a certain extent, exclusivity) which differ greatly from the ones that are associated with "off licence". It seems that the most suitable strategy would be one of translation through definition: an explanation of the meaning of the English term can be included in the target text (for instance, "establecimiento de venta/tienda de bebidas alcohólicas"). The loss of the connotations of popularity and colloquialism of the original denomination, "offie", in the target text would have to be accepted.

Leeson's choice of exoticism as the translation strategy for *Don*, *Doña* led to a loss of a different nature. These titles indicate superiority of social status in certain instances (as when Amador or Muecas use it to address Pedro); but they serve as a mere mark of social deference in others (Pedro becomes "Don Pedro" in the boarding house; "Doña Luisa" is never referred to in the text without the title; we also encounter a reference to "Don Manolo", Ts: 39, and "Don Eulogio", Ts: 266-267 and 269). Their function in the text is sufficiently clear, and a flavour of the source culture is retained in the target text. However, when a metalinguistic reference to the title is made ("momento en que recuperaba el *Don* que la amistad, el lupanar, la borrachera y el amor le habían sucesivamente arrebatado", Ts: 123), the translator deleted the passage, with the subsequent loss in meaning, both denotative and connotative.

**Cultural borrowing** hinges on the understanding of target-text readers of a foreign word or expression. Thus, "Halloween" (LF: 426) remained unchanged in Moreno's translation (CL: 517), since the term, and the concept behind it, will be familiar to the target-text readership, given the proliferation of B-movies on this subject<sup>137</sup>. However, this strategy can be applied in cases where the borrowed term obscures the meaning of the passage. An allusion to cricket (a sport which has elitist connotations in Great

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<sup>137</sup>This is an example of how "poor" translation, such as the kind that can be found in the dubbing of B-movies, can contribute to raising an awareness of elements which bear a cultural mark. The positive effect of these poor quality translations is that they familiarise audiences with foreign concepts.

Britain and some of its old colonies and, at the same time, is practically unknown in Spain), such as “as one might say ‘nice’ of a pretty girl in the street or of the straight drive on the cricket field” (LF: 279), will lack in the target text the meaning which it conveys in the source text. Moreno translated this passage as: “como se puede decir ‘fantástica’ de una chica guapa que pase por la calle o de un *drive* derecho en el campo de cricket” (CL: 343). Leaving aside the lack of gender agreement between “fantástica” and “un *drive* derecho”, the main problem with this rendition is that it would be unintelligible for the vast majority of the target-text readership<sup>138</sup>.

**Calque**, as a translation strategy, maintains a sense of the foreignness of the source text in the foreign language<sup>139</sup>. Besides, it can be essential in order to retain the links between form and content. The compliment with which Nicola Six is greeted on two occasions (LF: 70, 264): “Miss World!” is an example of this. Martin Amis declared on the subject of the symbolical value of the figure of Nicola Six: “She is quite political, in that she satirises both love and sex. And I wanted her to stand for the planet, in a vague way” (in: *City Limits* 21-28 September, 1989)<sup>140</sup>. Moreno translated “Miss World!” as “¡Miss Mundo!” (CL: 94, 325), thus preserving the symbolism mentioned above. Moreno, however, opted for a communicative strategy (see below) for the sequence of cliché formulae which accompany the first occurrence of “Miss World!”, “Give us a smile. *Please*. Ah, come on--light up. It might never happen!”: (“Concedenos una sonrisa. Por favor. Venga, ilumínate. ¿Qué te cuesta?” (CL: 94). As a result, the irony contained in the source-text words (Nicola knows that what is going to happen, her own murder, is an unavoidable fact) is lost.

**Communicative translation** is the strategy that Moreno chose for “onion bhaji” (LF: 41), since this expression is used in the source text as a term of comparison: “su pelo se asemeja a una escarola” (CL: 60). Other communicative strategies include translation by definition (“huevos rebozados” [CL: 94, 269...], for “Scotch eggs” [LF: 70, 216...]), by semantic approximation (“sausage” [TS: 155], for “chorizo” [Ts:

<sup>138</sup> Cultural transplantation could be applied here (de un pase en el campo de fútbol”, for instance). However, the term “cricket” itself will be perceived as an exoticism by target text readers, which can have a positive effect, since it may be interpreted as a new piece of information about the source culture.

<sup>139</sup> Calque, could, however, lead to a distortion of meaning when applied to idiomatic expressions. For example, Moreno translated “*Memoirs of a Listener. On the Grapevine*” (LF: 39) as “*Memorias de un oyente y En la viña*” (CL: 58), which results in the loss of the link to the plot of the figurative meaning of “on the grapevine” for target-text readers.

<sup>140</sup> Martin Amis elaborated on his own metaphor in the course of an interview published in *The New York Times Book Review* (4 March 1990), when he suggested that the planet itself is the “Murderee” [the term he uses to introduce Nicola in the plot of *London Fields*] in the novel (quoted by Diedrick, 1995: 155).



189]), by description (“raw, cheap brandy” [TS: 104], for “ojén o cazalla” [Ts: 127]), by expansion (“one of the gentlemen in El Greco’s ‘Burial of Count Orgaz’ ” [TS: 234], for “conde de orgaz” [Ts: 281]), by addition (“Escorial Monastery” [TS: 247], for “el Monasterio” [Ts: 294]), or by metonymy (“hamburguesas” [CL: 195], for “junk food” [LF: 156]).

Comprehensibility and naturalness of expression are enhanced by these strategies. On the other hand, the foreignness of the source text is diminished for target-text readers. Furthermore, distortions can happen due to a misinterpretation of the original, as when Moreno translated “gamberro” (CL: 35) by “old Ted” (LF: 21), even though “teddy boy” is used in Spanish. Leeson, on his part, reversed the original meaning<sup>141</sup> of “paredes berroqueñas” (Ts: 209), which he translated as “walled in naked granite” (TS: 172).

It is assumed that **cultural transplantation** presupposes the greatest transgression against the otherness of the source text. However, it can play on the common elements that are shared by the source and target cultures, and, in consequence, it does not invariably alienate the source text from its own context. This was achieved by Moreno when he translated “Osh Kosh B’Gosh” (LF: 85), a make of expensive denim-wear virtually unknown in the target culture, as “Levi’s 501” (CL: 112), a make with the same connotations which is popular in both source and target culture. On other occasions, the original cultural mark disappears, but it is not replaced by an element which would not be necessarily associated to the target culture. For example, when Postman Pat, a character in British children’s stories, is presented as the epitome of celibacy in *London Fields* (“Sexually I’m dead already. Sexually I’m Postman Pat”, LF: 185), Moreno avoided a reference to a comparable character which would have been recognisable for his readers<sup>142</sup>, and translated: “Sexualmente, yo ya estoy acabado. Un eunuco de Constantinopla haría mejor papel.” (CL: 232).<sup>143</sup>

Nevertheless, cultural transplantation can lead to an alienation of the source text from the cultural context in which it was conceived, as when the mention of a character in a

<sup>141</sup> Berruguete’s Mannerist style is characterised by ornate carvings, mainly in alabaster.

<sup>142</sup> We could have “Epi” (Ernie), “Blas” (Bertie), or “la rana Gustavo” (Kermit the Frog) as the archetype of celibacy in the target text.

<sup>143</sup> Strangely, on the second occasion that Postman Pat appears in the source text (LF: 323), Moreno chose to include a footnote, explaining that he is a “Personaje famoso y entrañable de la programación infantil de la televisión británica.” (CL: 395).

Spanish television programme, “*Espinete*” (CL: 148) replaces the original references to “Blue Peter” (LF: 116) and “Jackanory” (ibid.).

The translator can also choose **non-translation** as a strategy, as it is the case with the titles: “It’s a Long Way to Tipperary” and “Roll Me Over in the Clover” (LF: 103; CL: 132), and the names of periodical publications, such as “*New York Review of Books*” (LF: 2; CL: 12), “*Evening News*” (LF: 170, CL: 213), “*The Lady*” (LF: 273; CL: 335) and “*Time*” (LF: 331; CL: 405), for example. In cases like these, the nature of the titles and their connotative meaning will be, more likely than not, unknown to target-text readers. Finally, **deletion** can be utilised as a translation strategy, when the information conveyed in the source text is considered to be redundant or insignificant (for example, Leeson rendered “coñac de orujo” [Ts: 95] simply as “cognac” [TS: 77]), or when a part of the discourse is deemed to be untranslatable (see above, the use of “Don” in *Tiempo de silencio*).

Culturally-marked terms or passages can be, of course, translated **literally**. In these cases, it would appear that the main losses are derived from the target-text readers’ lack of familiarity with the source culture, or from the absence of reference points in the target culture to which the readers can relate the original message, as the following example seems to corroborate. The reference: “She looked like the vamp in the ad, just before the asshole in the helicopter or the submarine shows up with the bathcubes or the chocolates” (LF: 26), would be meaningless for average target-text readers, since the ads mentioned are unknown in the target culture. Moreno’s translation, “Parecía la vamp del anuncio, justo antes de que el gilipollas del helicóptero o del submarino aparezca con los desodorantes (sic) o los bombones” (CL: 41), lacks the extratextual context that would make it meaningful.

Even when target-text readers have an understanding of a source-text term (whether it is a cultural borrowing or is translated), the situation could arise that the connotations of such a term differ from those which are present in the source culture. For example, “pub” is a word which evokes an idea of luxury and refinement in the Spanish cultural context. These connotations are absent from the same term when used in the British context. It will, therefore, probably shock the target text reader to come across places like “The Black Cross” or “The Golgotha” in the pages of *London Fields*. However, the nature of such places, about which Martin Amis said: “Pubs can be terrible comedies of self-destruction, and very English, such a grotesque way of spending time” (*The Sunday Telegraph*, 17 September 1989) is sufficiently defined throughout

the novel. This kind of contextual information also results in a transference of cross-cultural information, since the readers can become aware of the difference in the connotative meaning of this word in either cultural frame.

Similarly, the references to Asian restaurants (see p. 136) may present a problem of anomalous collocation in the target text. This kind of establishment, very popular in Great Britain, is, nevertheless, surrounded by a halo of exoticism in the Spanish cultural frame (as is Indian food; see above). Readers of the target text would have to guess this information, which would be obvious to any member of the source culture. The positive effect of this circumstance is that, as mentioned above in reference to other textual elements, these readers will become acquainted with a trait of the source culture of which they may not have been previously aware.

A Spanish reader will be familiar with Mexican chilli, apricot madeleines and apple pies. He or she will probably perceive them as something exotic (in the case of the former) or as a form of delicacy (in the case of the last two), as opposed to the role of junk food that they play in *London Fields*. In the target text it should be made clear that "Chicken Pilaff and four Bramley Apple Pies" (LF: 104) and "Mexican Chilli and Four Apricot Madeleines" (LF: 359) are not *haute cuisine* menus, but, rather, prepared dishes of dubious nutritious quality. Martin Amis resorts to an ingenious strategy to point out the true nature of this type of food in the source text: he capitalises the words, which thus appear in the same fashion as they would on their packages. The translator could deploy the same strategy in the target text, which, in conjunction with the contextual information on Keith's lifestyle, would make the understanding of the passages in question easier. Moreno, however, chose not to apply it (see CL: 133, 437), and, as a result, the target text is potentially confusing.

Martín-Santos displays throughout *Tiempo de silencio* a catalogue of occupations in which many of the socially underprivileged engaged themselves as a result of the depressed post-war economy and the rampant blackmarketeering. Whereas most of these are easily translatable, others require a knowledge of the source culture in order to be understood, even when the linguistic elements which refer to them are easily translatable. For example, "la idea loca que echó a todos los ciegos a la calle" refers to the existence of a charity which ran (and still runs) a lottery, the tickets for which are sold by blind people in the streets. A translation like Leeson's, "what crazy notions drive all the blind onto the streets" (TS: 13) is ambiguous.

Drinks are sometimes the object of different consumption habits across cultures. The case of “coñac” (which always appears in *Tiempo de silencio* under the hispanised spelling) can be examined here in conjunction with the denomination of a different alcoholic drink: “whisky” (Ts: 160, 233, 234...). Brandy was (and still is) a national product. Relatively cheap, it was favoured by male members of the lower strata of society as an accompaniment to their breakfast or an after-lunch tippie. It was referred to as “coñac”, as opposed to “brandy” which was a more expensive, better-quality variety of the same beverage. In the target culture, on the other hand, the situation is reversed: “cognac” has connotations of superiority in comparison with “brandy” (Leeson’s chosen translation). Whisky was mostly an import and, as a result, an extremely expensive drink in the Spain of the 1940’s. It had high-class connotations. It was drunk by the rich, whereas the working classes had “coñac”. This situation is reversed in the target culture: in Britain and the US, whisky is a more common drink than brandy and the social connotations of these beverages are reversed with respect to the source culture. The collocation of the term “brandy” in the target text may be perceived as anomalous.

In all the instances mentioned above, the information which can be inferred from the context helps compensate the cultural gap in translation. The readers of the target text are confronted with elements which are alien to their own cultural frame, but these elements do not appear in isolation--they are integrated in a context which provides valuable information about them. Thus, the sense of strangeness which may arise from certain source text elements when expressed in the target language is alleviated by the contextual information which emanates from the novels themselves. Anyhow, as indicated before, the examples quoted above are isolated occurrences which provide anecdotal reference to the source culture.

### 3. *Culturally marked concepts*

Both in *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* there also appear concepts bound to the source culture which are sustained throughout the novels and underpin their plots. For the sake of clarity, these will be examined separately in the sections below.

### 3.1. London Fields

Martin Amis seems to address his fiction to a British readership, or to one familiar with British culture. The presence of elements linked to British culture is pervasive in *London Fields*. They provide a background for the action in the novel and are, at the same time, intertwined with the narrative structure to the point of constituting an essential part of the plot.

A concept which, by definition, is absent from Spanish culture is the self-perception of what “is” English, of those features which characterise the source culture as seen by its members: the “sameness” perceived by the source-text readers will inevitably become “otherness” for target-text ones. The socio-cultural mannerisms of the English are a constant source of satire in *London Fields*. Quoted below is a passage which combines observation of both linguistic and cultural peculiarities and which, as a result, poses translation problems:

The class system just doesn't know when to call it a day. Even a nuclear holocaust, I think, would fail to make such of a dent in it. Crawling through the iodized shithouse that used to be England, people would still be brooding about accents and cocked pinkies, about maiden names and *settee* or *sofa*, about the proper way to eat a roach in society. Come on. Do you take the head off first, or start with the legs?  
(LF: 24)

Moreno opted for a variety of strategies in the translation of this passage:

- a. He translated “accents” literally, “acentos” (CL: 39). The same strategy was applied in the case of “maiden names” (“apellidos de soltera”, *ibid.*).
- b. He opted for cultural transplantation in the case of “cocked pinkies”, which he rendered as “precios de bonsais”.
- c. The pair “settee or sofa” was communicatively translated as “canapés o sofás”. In this case, an addition (“discutiendo... sobre si es mejor un canapé que un sofá”) would have also been desirable, since those two terms do not present any register variation in Spanish.
- d. Finally, he appears to have misinterpreted the sardonic allusion to table manners in a world where all sea life will be extinct and only vermin will have survived, since he



translated “the proper way to eat a roach in society” as “la mejor manera de comer el marisco en sociedad” (ibid.).

Etiquette is fairly uniform throughout the western world. The readers of the target text can, therefore, grasp the sarcastic allusions to the affectation of a cocked little finger in someone holding a cup, and the futility of the rules according to which seafood (or roaches, in a hypothetical post-nuclear holocaust society) should be eaten. On the other hand, accents in the Spanish cultural frame tend to be associated with regional variations, and do not carry a social stigma similar to English accents. Also, Spanish women do not normally give up their maiden names when they get married (in fact, their surnames are perpetuated, usually in second place, following the father’s, after the first name of their offspring). And, to conclude, a sofa is called a *sofá* at all levels of the Spanish social scale.

In order to avoid incongruity in the target text, it would be desirable to replace “maiden names” with an expression which the readers can identify as bearing some relation to social formality, such as “fórmulas de cortesía”, or “tratamientos honoríficos”, and the pair “settee”/“sofa”, with two target language terms which are opposed to each other in terms of register (for instance, “nevera”/“frigorífico” “lavaplatos”/“lavavajillas”, or a pair with similar characteristics).

R. Z. Sheppard claims that Martin Amis “nurtures his distemper from sources that go beyond the real and imaginary injuries of Britain’s class system” (*Time*, 22 June 1987). However, the caustic account that Martin Amis gives of the social system in Britain is, perhaps, the most pervasive of the abstract culturally-bound elements in *London Fields*, and, as such, the one that lends itself most to different interpretations by source-text readers, on the one hand, and target-text readers, on the other.

In *London Fields*, Martin Amis presents a “realistic” vision of contemporary British society deformed by a satirical perspective. He has been labelled as a class-snob, and accused of manipulating class-relations in his works, in such a way that those in the lowest strata of society<sup>144</sup> always appear denigrated. However, it could be said that *London Fields* is a classless (in the conventional sense of the term “class”) novel. Although the Talents live in a ghastly council flat and Kath cannot ever make ends

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<sup>144</sup>It does not seem appropriate to apply the denomination “working class” to Keith Talent and his peers, since they are all unemployed. Paradoxically, however, Nicola states at one point that what she cannot stand in Keith is that he is “so working class” (LF: 385).

meet, the reader is told that Keith makes more money than the Prime Minister... and squanders it all on gambling, drink and women. The difference between classes is established, therefore, by lifestyle and not purchasing power (see also p. 97 further reflections on the role of social class in *London Fields*).

At one point, Martin Amis tells the reader through Samson Young's voice: "I need the class system" (LF: 259). The interplay between social classes does, indeed, constitute one of the pillars of the plot of *London Fields*. It operates most intensely between Keith and Guy, in the manner of a see-saw. Keith can exert a certain control over Guy, by virtue of the power that his unprivileged social position bestows upon him: his vital experience is broader than the rich man's and his street-wise charisma acts as a powerful force in everyday matters. However, all in all, money, breed and social position are the deciding factors in the social game: "A strong interaction was taking place between the men: the power of class, at its strongest over short distances. Guy looked at Keith with contempt. And this was the Knight of the Black Cross" (LF: 341).

An essential component of *London Fields* which is linked to the notion of class is the game of darts. Darts constitute one of the pillars on which the plot of the novel is sustained. For the author, this game holds a symbolism which is relevant to the thematical content of the novel: "Darts is dead. Its decline followed an opposite course to that of nuclear deterrence. It tried to sanitise or detoxify itself (no alcohol, no tobacco, no obesity); but then it transpired that the prospect of messy self-destruction was the only thing anyone liked about it" (M. Amis, 1993: viii).

Moreover, darts has a structural function in *London Fields*. Keith Talent's progress towards the final of the national championship, which coincides with the date of Nicola's murder, punctuates the narrative rhythm of the novel and sparks off a series of events which involve all the main characters: Samson Young takes darts lessons in Keith Talent's garage, thus getting to know Keith's peculiar social and familiar environment. Nicola, on her part, fabricates a story to obtain money from Guy. She gives this money to Keith, so that he can repay his creditors, who had threatened him with breaking his "darting finger". Should this have happened, he could not have carried on playing and, therefore, Nicola's planned "suicide" would have never taken place. Thus, darts work as connecting thread in *London Fields*. This sport is not popular at all in Spain and constitutes a minority leisure activity. As a result, the readers of the target text will not associate darts immediately with the socio-cultural

context to which they belong within the source culture. However, as the plot progresses, they will get a general idea of the role of this activity in the British context. In this way, the loss is partially compensated by the context, even though the connotations that this plot device would evoke in the source culture cannot be reproduced in translation.

A culturally-bound element which, as mentioned elsewhere (see pp. 131-32) is closely related to the plot of *London Fields* are the allusions to "Guy Fawkes Night". Since what is commemorated on this date is an event related to British history alone (the conspiracy to bring down the monarchy of James I), the cultural resonance of such a concept is limited to the English-speaking world. In Spain, the Night of St. John is celebrated in a similar fashion to the one in which Guy Fawkes' night is celebrated in Britain: there are bonfires, in which rag dolls are usually burnt, and bangers are thrown, and children go around houses and streets asking for money to finance their entertainment. This would make it possible to translate "Guy Fawkes' Night" as "Noche de las Hogueras" (Moreno's choice), "Bonfire Night" (a denomination which is also very popular in Britain). However, there is a fact that renders this straightforward solution inadequate: the name of this event is closely linked to the name of one of the main characters of the novel, Guy Clinch. The information which is apparent from the source text is very relevant to the development of the plot. Thus, it would seem appropriate to combine the denomination "Noche de las Hogueras" with a mention of Guy Fawkes, which can be clarified in a note, the first time it occurs in the novel. In subsequent occurrences, the name of the English historical figure can be maintained, in order to avoid confusion and maintain the connection with Guy Clinch.

### 3.2. *Tiempo de silencio*

Martín-Santos wrote primarily for his own society. He was trying to raise awareness among his fellow-citizens of the effect that a dictatorial regime (a system which imposed a code of silence and was upheld by that very same silence) could have on the individual. Without being a propaganda text, *Tiempo de silencio* is a politically-charged novel, written with a specific temporal and geographical scenario in mind. Martín-Santos himself stated that his aim when writing was "Modificar la realidad española" (in Wynecoff-Díaz, 1968: 237). From this it follows that the novel will acquire new and different meanings when extracted from the context in which and for which it was created.

Rey wrote: "Quien lea *Tiempo de silencio* ha de tener a la vista un buen pedazo de cultura europea y española. Sin ello, la interpretación de la obra se descarría irremisiblemente. Para comprender un lenguaje literario hay que conocer también el contexto, el destinatario y el emisor." (1977: 151-152). Rey was, in all probability, referring to the source text. However, his comment emphasises the underlying conflict in the translation of a text with the characteristics of *Tiempo de silencio*. With a more critical focus, Curutchet establishes a differentiation which, although again referring to the source text, seems particularly relevant when approaching the reproduction of the original in a foreign language, for a foreign culture: "debe discriminarse lo que en [*Tiempo de silencio*] hay de genuina obra de arte y lo que constituye su importancia, su *necesidad* histórica." (1973: 29). The survival of a novel whose importance lies in the role it played in a specific era, will be affected by changes in historical, cultural and social circumstances.

This is not to say that the message of *Tiempo de silencio* is only relevant to the context in which it was created, or that Martín-Santos aimed at producing a perishable text. What is propounded here is that the meaning of a novel with the characteristics that *Tiempo de silencio* has is bound to change according to chronological and/or geographical premises. Translation presupposes an even more dramatic transposition, since it incorporates an additional element: the linguistic component. As Berman says (see p. 209), the strangeness of the source text is increased by its strangeness in the foreign language.

As well as portraying post-war society, Martín-Santos also provides his readers with an overview of Spain's more remote history ("desde la lejana noche de la edad media cuando ellos con su sable levantado consiguieron dar forma a expensas de la morisma de Toledo...", Ts: 121) and mentions figures from past periods: "Carlos III" (Ts: 274); "El pecado de la Cava también hubo de ser pagado" (Ts: 285); "páramo felipesco" (Ts: 274), in allusion to Philip II. The historical episodes which lead up to Franco's dictatorship and which, to a greater or lesser extent, influenced the work of a generation of intellectuals and artists are also recalled in *Tiempo de silencio*: the lost Empire (evoked in the widow's speech, Ts: 20 ff.), "la República" (Ts: 71), "una guerra y dos paces"<sup>145</sup>, (Ts: 72), "la última guerra" (Ts: 98), etc. All these passages do not present any translation difficulties, although they may occasionally pose

<sup>145</sup> Possibly a veiled condemnation of one of the dictatorial regime's favourite pieces of propaganda, which heralded the post-war years as "La paz de Franco".



comprehensibility problems to target-text readers. Leeson clearly felt this was the case with the mention to la Cava, which he clarified in an extensive footnote (TS: 238).

The representation of events which were chronologically closer to the writing of the source text is, however, more vivid and prevalent. Martín-Santos evaluates 1940's Spain in a manner which is more empathic than sympathetic. Although the feelings of anger and frustration and the existentialist nausea which run through *Tiempo de silencio* are genuine and the author's suffering stems from the suffering of his nation, what emerge from the pages of the novel are grotesque images and a derogatory, at times even condescending, portrayal of Spain. However, the criticism of the political situation and its consequences is relentless. It often appears in the form of ironic allusions, due to the lack of freedom of speech in that era: "estando como estamos en un estado de derecho donde existen tales cosas como policía, jueces y capacidad denunciante del ciudadano libre" (Ts: 13), "cómo vivía este pueblo en los que ellos mismos dicen -ellos sabrán por qué- que fueron los años del hambre" (Ts: 18), "la mendicidad (ya muy reprimida por una sociedad eminentemente progresiva)" (Ts: 144). The infamous post-war "estraperlo", or black-marketeering, is also portrayed in *Tiempo de silencio*, where the less privileged are found grotesquely engaged "en la especulación en piedras de mechero" (Ts: 70). The translation of these passages is relatively straightforward. However, the irony contained in them can become lost in the target text. This may happen for two reasons. First, because the transplantation of the source text to an alien cultural context makes it difficult to discern what is meant ironically: "Besides, we have to uphold the law, and there are such things as the police, the courts, and the right of the free citizen to appeal to the law." (TS: 8); or, second, because the translator appears not to have grasped the irony contained in the original: "how all these people lived during those years which they call, *with good reason*, the hungry years." (TS: 13, italics added).

Religion was omnipresent in everyday life in the Spain of Martín-Santos. The fact that it was plagued by superstition is ridiculed in *Tiempo de silencio* as part of the portrayal of social values (for instance, in the scenes that precede Florita's death, Ts: 124 ff.). Popular devotion was channelled towards numerous saints and different representations and denominations for Mary (Dorita is said to resemble the "virgencita sevillana", Ts: 278, allusion which is accompanied by an explanatory footnote in Leeson's translation, TS: 231). Martín-Santos wanted to portray a country which had turned its back on the ideological and philosophical trends which flourished elsewhere in Europe and proudly retreated into more primeval beliefs. In Spain, "ochenta años de



idealismo europeo" (Ts: 162) are happily glossed over. Foreign cultural trends are, nevertheless, also criticised in *Tiempo de silencio*: anglo-saxon positivism is "chato y corto" (Ts: 256-257) and even the elite appear sometimes to fall victim to their own privileges: one of Matías' friends is "víctima de su bachillerato francés" (Ts: 231). And yet it is foreign symbols of cultural or social status which mark the difference between classes. The Director's "volúmenes en alemán [y] una colección incompleta de una revista norteamericana" (Ts: 234), the imported Virginia tobacco cigarettes that Matías' mother and her social peers smoke (see Ts: 152 and 160), the expensive perfumes, "(algunos importados de París a despecho de las dificultades de la balanza de pagos)" (Ts: 160), which the high-society ladies wear, their imported cars ("autos inmensos, potentísimos, con formas de elegantes cetáceos", Ts: 77): this is what separates them all from the common people, whose chances in society are stunted by their own condition, a condition over which they do not have any control.

Martín-Santos also defines the Spaniards racially, as Ortega had most famously done, as an "invertebrate", intellectually impoverished people. Alfonso Rey comments in this respect: "queda claro que Martín-Santos interpreta la historia a través del prisma que constituye la teoría orteguiana sobre el ser de los españoles." (1977: 236). However, this historical interpretation is critical of its own model. Martín-Santos was disenchanted with Ortega's philosophy, which he had previously embraced. In fact, he launches an attack on Ortega, who is metaphorically introduced in the novel as Goya's "Grand Bouc", and his views on the masses. Ortega's philosophy had inspired the ideology of the Falange Española, one of the political "families" of Francoism, and it propounded that the Spanish race had been corrupted. Martín-Santos echoes his theories in a devastating mental speech: "La sangre visigótica enmohecida" (Ts: 158), "Todos somos tontos. Y ese ser tontos no tiene remedio." (ibid.), "víctimas de su sangre gótica de mala calidad y de bajo pueblo mediterráneo permanecerán adheridos a sus estructuras asiáticas" (ibid.).

Ortega is mocked by the author: "qué listo eres tú para un pueblo que tiene las frentes tan menguadas. Y puesto que de una noble sustancia tú estás hecho, oh buco, a todos nos desprecias" (ibid.). Nevertheless, Martín-Santos redeems the philosopher towards the end of his monologue, suggesting that Spaniards should go beyond the racial disparagement when judging the man ("no mirando tu máscara sino tu ojo", Ts: 159):

“Pero eres bueno; por eso alzas tu pezuña izquierda más alta que tu derecha<sup>146</sup>. Por eso te vistes con ese disfraz que no es tuyo...” (ibid.). It can be argued that there must have been a degree of identification of the author with Ortega. The viewpoint of Martín-Santos was close to that of the philosopher: he is also one of the privileged few, he also had to look down when commenting on Spanish society. Martín-Santos took it upon himself to open the eyes of his fellow-citizens, which implies that he felt in a position of superiority with respect to them. This is not to say that his ideology was reactionary: he opposed Franco’s regime openly and he did not believe that the racial characteristics of the Spanish people determined their role in history and made them deserve what they got. Quite the contrary: he wrote his novel as a protest against national circumstances.

However, Martín-Santos’ stand sometimes borders on bourgeois conservatism (both Florita and Dorita are punished, “killed”, in the novel directly as a result of their getting involved in extra-marital sexual relationships<sup>147</sup>) and often falls into a naive sort of populism (for instance, the only character who is redeemed in *Tiempo de silencio* is Encarna-Ricarda, an illiterate woman who has suffered a life of constant abuse and humiliation and has nevertheless retained a “goodness” and integrity lacking in the rest of the characters in the novel). Also, when Martín-Santos’ alter ego, Pedro, talks of “el hombre de la meseta” (Ts: 290), it sounds as if he were referring to a stage in the evolution of the human race, in line with Ortega’s philosophy.

Once more, the passages quoted above are translatable in themselves. However, this representation of Spanish society needs to be put into context to be fully comprehended. Source-text readers will probably be familiar with the historical events and figures which put in an appearance in *Tiempo de silencio*, which will make an understanding of their significance within the text comparatively easy. On the other hand, average target-text readers will be handicapped in this respect because they belong to a different cultural context. This would appear to confirm Evans’ view (after Bhabha; see p. 211) that displacement across cultures results in “an identification, rather than an identity”, and that subjects or forms of culture can never be fully

<sup>146</sup> Another covert political allusion, this time in reference to the salute, which, along with other fascist trappings, was adopted by Franco’s regime. The philosopher raises his left arm higher than his right arm, thus contravening the dictatorial convention.

<sup>147</sup> Díaz-Varcárcel interprets these circumstances as a sort of punishment “concebido por la sociedad global, de manera más bien inconsciente y apoyado por la tradición hipercatólica.” (1982: 37). However, there is nothing in the novel to indicate that Martín-Santos’ intention when introducing the episodes of Florita’s and Dorita’s deaths as the events which respectively trigger and put an end to the main plot-line of the novel were included as an instance of social parody.

translated. This is a loss which has more to do with what the process of literary translation entails, an alienation of the source text, than with anything the translator can do in order to produce a satisfactory target text. When “sameness” becomes “otherness”, when the backdrop to the story is not the reader’s own, the ground shared by author and reader disappears. It is connotation and the familiar images that the original evokes that cannot be translated.

The examples presented below emphasise the importance of the relative position of cultures in a power relation (see pp. 215-16): English speakers will be able to recognise the respective target-text terms. However, their understanding of these elements will be tinged by their own perceptions of the source culture, or their knowledge of it.

Bullfighting, “toreo”, and various terms associated with this activity appear profusely throughout the text (Ts: 8, 17, 18, 22, 25...), and they emphasise the underlying theme of Spanish inferiority with respect to the English-speaking world. Alfonso Rey (1977: 205) comments in relation to this: “Las alusiones a los toros se repiten en la novela como si se tratara de un estribillo.” At one point, this theme is used as an allegory of the political situation (see Ts: 224-25 and TS: 184-85). There are English equivalents for most of the related terms. For obvious reasons, the importance and significance of this tradition in Spain will escape the vast majority of foreign readers, although most of them will be familiar with bullfighting and what it entails. The connotations of brutality and primitivism may prevail in their mind. In a way, this does not have a completely negative effect on the translation, since one of the underlying themes of the novel, however ironic, is the primitivism of the Spanish people, as opposed to the intellectual and cultural sophistication of the English-speaking world. The main difference that can be predicted, from the point of view of the readers’ perception is that foreign readers will probably not see beyond the stereotype, whereas Spanish readers will be able to place the references in their own context.

What has been said above can also be applied to “flamenco” (Ts: 22, 26,27...) and its different manifestations: “juerga flamenca” (Ts: 26); “lo que más se apreciaba era el saber batir palmas” (Ts: 97), “gitano cantando” (Ts: 74). There is no straightforward translation for expressions such as “juerga flamenca” or “batir palmas” which can capture the entire meaning of the Spanish expressions. Leeson’s chosen versions, “flamenco show” (TS: 20) and “the most important thing is to be able to clap with your hands” (TS: 21), fail to capture the original meaning. The popularity of flamenco will

probably make the image which is conjured up in the mind of English readers very different from the Spanish perception of the source-text elements.

Housing is a lexical domain which presents huge variations even between relatively close cultural contexts. For example, the word “chabola” is translated by Leeson as “shanty” (TS: 7), “hut” (TS: 9, 11) or “shack” (TS: 9). This indecision gives an idea of the absence of a straightforward equivalent in the target language. However, “chabola” is a term whose meaning is unequivocal in the source language: a type of dwelling characteristic of deprived urban areas, made with a variety of cast-off materials. English uses the phrase “shanty towns”, although they do not exist as such in Britain. This urban phenomenon can be appreciated in all its magnitude further on in the novel, but it is important to establish its real nature at an early stage within the target text. A single term should be used to refer to Muecas’ abode, and great care should be taken so that this term does not suggest that the “chabola” is some sort of shed attached to Muecas’ house, as the ones that appear in the published translation may do for those readers not aware of Spain’s social situation in the 1940’s.

#### **4. Summary**

Elements which bear a cultural mark may present translation difficulties essentially for two reasons:

**a.** Because they are likely to be interpreted in a different way in the target culture. These can exist in both the source and the target cultures (e.g. darts) or be foreign, but well-known, in the source culture (as is the case with the references to bullfighting and flamenco). Precisely because they may not be perceived as alien to the target culture, their true significance within the source culture, which is different, may be overlooked in translation. However, their connotative meaning can sometimes be inferred from the context (for instance, in the case of the socially differentiated pair brandy/whisky).

**b.** Because they are unknown in the target culture. These could be culture-specific elements proper (such as the names of characteristically Spanish food) or elements which derive from other cultures but have become common currency in the source culture (for instance, Indian food in Britain). The clarification of these terms is comparatively simple: it can be done by means of an explanatory addendum to the source text, or by substitution of an element which is understandable in the target text



for the original one. However, this could involve a loss of information about the source culture in translation.

Therefore, the translatability problems posed by the occurrence of culture-bound elements in the source text can be of two different types:

- a. They may arise from the different perception of a given element in either cultural frame.
- b. They may arise from the non-existence of a given element in the target culture.

In the first case, the translation problem presents essentially cultural characteristics, since the substitution of lexical elements, if required, is straightforward. In the second instance, however, an additional linguistic problem arises, since no straightforward substitution is possible at a lexical level. A number of strategies is available in these cases, depending on the bias that the translation is to have.

It would seem that the untranslatability of culturally-marked terms or concepts in *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* lies in the impossibility for the translators to re-create the relationship that exists between the original authors and their audiences (as happens when the narrative plays on self-perception). It could be argued that to perform this task is not the translators' purpose, since the relationship between translators and their readers is essentially different in nature. And yet, when comprehensibility hinges on the knowledge or values implied in the original relationship, the texts in question can be considered to be untranslatable in this respect.

As the examples in this chapter show, the translatability problems lie with extra-textual circumstances (the background and expectations of the readers), rather than with textual elements per se, which can be translated following a variety of strategies. Besides, contextual information is usually a valuable aid in minimising the translation problem: the "difficult" element may be accompanied by qualifying or defining descriptive items within the source text itself, which may lend themselves to a relatively trouble-free translation process.

A potentially negative aspect of the occurrence of culturally-marked terms in the source text is that they tend to be more easily accessible to those familiar with the source culture and may, therefore, alienate the readers of the target text, especially if the



source text is crammed with elements which are foreign to these readers. The perception of elements which are bound, in one way or another, to the source culture may be distorted by their cultural experience or expectations. In some cases, their understanding of the text may be impaired by the appearance of elements unknown to them, unless the translator opts for producing a target text with a target culture bias and communicative translation or cultural transposition are the strategies chosen. On the other hand, the presence of culture-bound elements in the source text has the positive quality of conveying information about the source culture: it brings readers closer to the Other. In this way, by reading a novel the target-text readers can gain access to knowledge which they may not have the chance to acquire in a more direct manner.

A translation that maintains the differences between the source and the target cultures is richer, since it can make the readers of the target text more aware of cultural factors, and de-centre them as part of the translational process. These cultural differences can, however, complicate the process of translation and even make the target text obscure and not easily understandable. It seems impossible to ignore the fact that *London Fields* was written in England, by an Englishman and, essentially, with an English audience in mind, or that *Tiempo de silencio* was addressing a very specific audience: that of 1960's Spain. The translator, as a communicator and a cultural mediator (see pp. 22-30), is confronted with what appears to be a stumbling block: to preserve the unmistakably foreign atmosphere of the novel and, at the same time, to produce a target text which is coherent and comprehensible. An awareness of the ideological issues which translation unavoidably involves is highly desirable. This is the fundamental value of bringing post-colonial and gender politics into translation theory and practice: post-modern discourse brings otherness to the fore and draws attention upon the existence of power relations between languages and cultures.

As shown by the examples in this chapter, both Moreno and Leeson alternated the use of strategies which brought the Other closer to their readers with the use of strategies which attempted to lead their readers to the Other. The strategies for the translation of terms which designate culture-bound elements can be usefully applied at different times, but none appears to have a general applicability throughout a text. The examples analysed aim to prove that each specific occurrence has to be considered separately in order to achieve a satisfactory balance between the two main objectives which should be contemplated:

- a. Keeping the source text in its own context, and, in so doing, facilitating the acquisition of information on a different culture by the readers of the target text.
- b. Facilitating the understanding of a foreign product for those who do not possess the knowledge of the source culture which is required to apprehend the meaning of the original text.

Interlingual translation does not only involve the conversion of the linguistic component of the source text into the target language, but also a transference from the source culture to the target culture. The main task that a literary translator has to face is that of bringing distant or unknown cultures closer to each other. The closer translators stay to the source text, the more their readers will learn about the foreign culture. As a rule, the further they depart from the original that they are translating, the more easily understandable the target text will be in the target culture. Making otherness accessible and understandable, whilst not falling in cultural misrepresentation or appropriation is rarely easy, but always necessary.

## Chapter 8: Conclusions

The analysis of the difficulties posed by the translation of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* reveals a certain degree of untranslatability in both novels, since the loss of some important features, both formal and content-related, appears to be unavoidable. The conclusions which follow have to be examined bearing in mind that the acceptance of some elements as untranslatable does not imply a hierarchy of languages. As argued above (see p. 46), the notion of difference does not carry an inherent component of superiority or inferiority. Leaving aside the contention that each language has its own limitations when compared to other languages, it is worth noting that literary works are linguistic acts which address a specific audience (i.e. one who can understand the source text). The fact that other audiences cannot appreciate the content or the formal characteristics of such texts when expressed in a different language does not imply that these audiences are, in any way, inferior to the source-text one.

The assumption that untranslatability does not exist, frequently qualified by premises which tend to refer to the formal configuration of the texts, has wide support amongst scholars. It seems to be based on a humanitarian conception (supported by an extrapolation of the notion that all people are created equal), combined with socio-anthropological postulates which may have a political hue, such as the ones that maintain that defending the notion of untranslatability leads to the establishment of hierarchy of languages and peoples (e.g. Kade; see p. 48). It is worth repeating here Nida's words (also quoted on p. 39) "that which unites mankind is greater than that which divides" (1964: 2), much in line with the humanitarian line of thought mentioned above. His statement is true to a certain extent. All concepts of human experience can, presumably, be grasped by any member of the human race. This does not, however, imply that the need for expressing these concepts verbally will be felt by all of them, or that the members of different linguistic communities will have a similar understanding of such concepts.

Elements which bear a strong cultural mark, such as linguistic variations, humour or intertextuality, as found in literature, are bound to be relatively untranslatable. This does not mean that certain languages or, for that matter, the people who

speak them, are superior to others. They are simply different, and difference does not necessarily call for a ranking of the items compared.

1. The translatability of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* is affected by textual and supratextual elements, and also by extratextual factors, which hinge on the relationship between the author and his audience and between the audience and the cultural frame to which it belongs.

*Tiempo de silencio* and *London Fields* seem to acquire a different meaning not only along the process that makes them into target texts, but also when they are read by foreign audiences. Therefore, the degree of translatability of these texts can be brought into question. This is not to say that the novels that have been dealt with here cannot be “expressed” in a different language: the fact that the both of them have been translated, if nothing else, would prove otherwise. Moreno’s *Campos de Londres* and Leeson’s *Time of silence* fulfil the comprehensibility criterion. On the other hand, significant components of the respective source texts are absent from them, as shown in the previous chapters. This can be due to the translators’ choice of strategy (variations in style, for instance), on some occasions, to the observance of prevailing conventions (as in the case of the names of the characters), on others. Finally, it could also be attributed to the impossibility of presenting a given source-text element in the target language (for example, the anglicisation of Martín-Santos’ prose), or to the existence of a cultural gap (as happens with some cultural and intertextual references).

When the translation of a text involves a transformation of the same into a new product, with meaning and formal characteristics which vary substantially from those of the original, it can be argued that this translation is inadequate. When the inadequacy of the translation hinges not on the inability of the translator, but rather on the text itself, it can be argued that such a text is relatively untranslatable. This is not just the case with the two novels on which this study has focused: it is also applicable to other pieces of literature.

Derrida’s words (1981: 20) seem to be relevant in this context: “for the notion of translation we would have to substitute a notion of *transformation*: a regulated transformation of one language by another, of one text by another.” Nevertheless, the transformation of a text can be taken to such extremes that it

acquires a new identity in the target language, due to the target text being presented in such a way that its readers cannot recognise the referents of the original, whether thematic or formal. It is possible to argue that such transformation transcends the limits of what is commonly understood by translation. This appears to be the case with both *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, which acquire a new identity when expressed in a new language, for two reasons:

- because the formal characteristics of the text, on their own or by virtue of their thematic links, cannot be reproduced in the target text.
  - because the interpretation of the text relies heavily on cultural factors and thus when made by target-culture readers will differ substantially from that made by source-text readers.
2. Authorial intentionality and source-text readership (conditioned by their own cultural background) can be interlinked. In the case of the two texts which have been examined here, there appear to be obvious links. These are factors which should be taken into account when determining how well a text will translate. Thus, it may be argued that untranslatability can be determined not only by elements intrinsic in the source text (i.e. textual), but also those external to it (contextual or cultural). Untranslatability can then be attributed to the fact that a translator cannot reproduce the relationship between the original author and his/her readership (see pp. 4 and 246), when the comprehension of a text hinges on this relationship to a significant extent (as seems to be the case with *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*).

In the case of *Tiempo de silencio*, it is clear that the author was addressing a clearly defined audience, in order to achieve his aim when writing the novel: in his own words, the creation of a mythology for society's use. By "society" we should read his own society, since subsequent changes in the political situation in Spain would render this pragmatic side to his work, if not the artistic one, irrelevant. As far as *London Fields* is concerned, the number of culturally-marked elements prove a strong bias towards the source culture and, therefore, an English-speaking audience (from a formal point of view) and, more specifically, a British one (from the point of view of the content).



A text can be perceived as some sort of private joke, from which people who do not share the reference points required for its interpretation would be excluded. This condition becomes particularly relevant from the perspective of the translator. The translatability of the text would be conditioned by the impossibility of conveying aspects of the form and/or the content of the text in such a way that they become meaningful for target-text readers. It is assumed that such aspects would be grasped by source-text readers due to the fact that they understand the source language and/or are part of the source culture.

3. It has been said that linguistic untranslatability is more difficult to overcome than cultural untranslatability (see p. 4), but if we take the above into consideration, this assertion is debatable. It can be argued that the literary translator translates language and that, as a result, only language can be translatable or untranslatable. Nevertheless, the case can arise when it is the specific links between language and culture which cause translation problems (see pp. 170-71 for a comment on features which would appear to be untranslatable for linguistic reasons, such as puns, but also rely on cultural factors for their effectiveness). Translatability can be hindered by cultural factors, whether they be textual or supratextual.

It seems appropriate to remember here that, in spite of the effect that the existence of a cultural gap can have in the reinforcement of the problems that linguistic issues may pose in translation, not all cultural references present translatability difficulties. Literature is a good way of disseminating information. Besides, the mass-media have contributed to a certain uniformity across the world, which may or may not be perceived as being a positive factor. Yet it can occasionally simplify the task of the translator, in that culture-specific elements become known to wider audiences through familiar and easily accessible channels.

4. On the same subject, it is worth remembering that formal components of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, such as proper names (see Chapter 4) or stylistic features (see Chapter 2, especially the section dealing with the style of *Tiempo de silencio*), can mirror the thematic content of the texts or contribute to its development. When authors choose to establish this type of relationship between matter and expression (and this is the case with other texts, besides the two novels analysed in this study), the translation of formal

features has to be carried out in relation to the thematic elements they are connected with, which is not always possible (as, for example, in the instance of the anglicisation of the prose in *Tiempo de silencio* when producing a target text in English; see pp. 84-86).

When form and content are as closely linked as they are in *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio*, it is difficult to compromise in translation. There is always the risk of omitting something important. To re-use an analogy suggested earlier on, it is as if the translator had to explain a private joke to people who are not aware of the story or its background for the space of hundreds of pages, trying to elucidate its content in order for its linguistic expression to make sense.

5. It has to be accepted that the entirety of a text cannot be reproduced in a foreign language. The sheer linguistic difference makes this practically impossible. Restrictions imposed by grammatical rules (for instance, word order, or the system of verbal tenses) or the lexical configuration of a language (such as word-length, or suffixes) are bound to alter its formal characteristics. There are, nevertheless, cases (and *Tiempo de silencio* and *London Fields* seem to fall into this category) in which it is not isolated elements but an accumulation of features or elements which may determine the level of translatability of a text.

Most linguistic occurrences can be translated in one way or another, even by resorting to strategies such as exoticism or paraphrase. However, in the case of the two texts which have been examined here, translators are confronted with a multitude of single items, many of them interrelated, which may not be of great importance in themselves, but in aggregate can distort not only the perception of the text by the target readership, but the presentation of the target text itself. In these instances, it is not just qualitative considerations which should be borne in mind, but also quantitative ones. That is to say, the frequency of occurrence of problematic elements should be taken into account alongside the nature of such elements.

There appears to be, therefore, a quantitative element which affects the translatability of these texts, as well as a qualitative one. In relation to this, it is worth mentioning that some tools which can help the translator elucidate those

matters of form or content which may turn out to be unclear for the target readership, such as footnotes or end-notes, would be inappropriate when the sum of elements which require clarification is too great. On the other hand, they can be successfully applied to isolated occurrences. Neither *Tiempo de silencio* nor *London Fields* could be considered to be of academic value, in their translated forms, *per se*, and if they are read as a matter of general interest or merely entertainment, it would be in the interest of the publishers and, by extension, of the translator, to avoid this kind of interference as much as possible.

6. Some of the translation problems which arise in the case of *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* are specific to the respective languages involved here. This confirms Mounin's observation that untranslatability should be determined by comparing one source language with one target language (see 1977: 312). For example, the imperfect use of English by Incarnacion (see pp. 110-11), in *London Fields*, or the anglicisation of certain passages in *Tiempo de silencio* would be more easily translatable into languages other than, respectively, Spanish and English. Incarnacion's speech could be made flawed in French, or German, for example, but not when it appears in her own mother tongue. In the same way, it would be possible to anglicise the syntax and vocabulary of any language but English, for obvious reasons.
  
7. There is a certain reciprocity between the two source cultures, and yet British culture is the more global of the two and therefore more easily recognisable in a foreign context. Whereas the subject matter of *Tiempo de silencio* might have appealed to an international audience when the novel was originally published (see p. 55), its interest seems to have waned with the passing of time. On the other hand, the media have ensured a long-lasting impact of the culture of anglophone communities on the rest of the world throughout the second half of the twentieth century. The power relationship which, according to Niranjana (1992) and Venuti (1992, 1995), amongst others, operates between languages seems, therefore, to have an effect on the translation of the two texts considered in this study. The Spanish-speaking readers of the translated version of *London Fields* will probably recognise more cultural references (those to the royal family, certain trade-marks, etc.) than the English-speaking readers of the translated version of *Tiempo de silencio*, given the more global status of British culture mentioned above.

Translation Studies is a multi-disciplinary area. There would appear to be a need for integrating disciplines, such as the theory of reception (see pp. 14-17), in the analysis of (un)translatability. Cultural differences can affect the way in which a text is perceived in the target culture, to such an extent that the conventional approach to translation may be insufficient to define the translatability of a text. In this sense, untranslatability can be defined by the impossibility of conveying within the target text itself<sup>148</sup> concepts which are evident from the source text, in such a way that they can be grasped by the target-text readership. If the reading experience of source-text and target-text receivers are not comparable and this is not due to the translator's inability to make it so, the source text would appear to be, to some extent, untranslatable.

This study aimed to demonstrate that it is not merely the linguistic component of a text, not even when it consists of the linguistic representation of cultural items, that may render a text relatively untranslatable. Extra-textual issues also have to be taken into account when appraising the way in which a piece of literature is likely to be perceived by foreign audiences. If translation is bound to transform the source text into something different, whether in the way it is presented or in the way it is understood, it could be argued that such a text is, to a certain degree, untranslatable. Some theorists would not accept this view, since the concept of translation itself can be stretched in several different directions. As explained in Chapter 1, some scholars (e.g. Nida) practise the equivalence-of-response principle, and therefore perceive certain translation strategies, such as cultural transposition, as being the norm. The drawbacks of founding a theory of translation on this principle have already been discussed (see pp. 10-11). Literal translation, advocated by others (Nabokov, for example; see p. 25-26), would not serve well the purposes of novels in which much of the meaning is based on formal features or has to be read "between the lines". Foreignising translation, as defended by Venuti (see p. 9), could not be effectively applied to a text such as *Tiempo de silencio*, which appears foreign in itself. Deconstructionist theories, as argued in Chapter 1 (see pp. 43-46), constitute a stimulating exercise in the philosophy of language, but are not well suited to the actual practice of translation,

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<sup>148</sup> I.e. without cramming the translation with footnotes which may be unwelcome or explaining concepts in a preface, for example.

which very often depends on the expectations of publishers and, ultimately, of the target readership.

It seems, therefore, reasonable to claim that *London Fields* and *Tiempo de silencio* are not fully translatable in what would be the conventional way for texts which are not intended for academic purposes. There is a clear link between this issue and that of observance of authorial intentionality (see Chapter 1, section 1.3). Translators working on a text intended for the general public will have to bear in mind that the expectations of the target-text readership will be different from those that the readers of a translation carried out for academic or special purposes may have. In the former context, and strictly speaking, translation would imply the *reproduction* of a text in a foreign language, and not an explanation, transformation (in the Deconstructionist sense) or commentary thereof. The translation difficulties posed by the two novels that have been dealt with in this study may appear to be extreme, because of the high level of formal elaboration of both texts. However, the condition of these texts, as far as their (un)translatability is concerned, is by no means unique. As a result, the conclusions drawn from their analysis can be applied to other pieces of literature.



## Appendix A

Standard translation treatises' terminology has been used throughout this study. Thus:

**Source text** is the text that is being translated.

**Target text** is the result of the translation of the source text.

**Source language** is the language in which the source text was written.

**Target language** is the language used in the production of the target text.

**Source culture** is the cultural frame to which the source text belongs.

**Target culture** is the cultural frame towards which the target text is directed.

## Appendix B

The information that follows was compiled thanks to the kind co-operation of the publishers mentioned, except for that concerning the English version of *London Fields*, which was obtained from David Rees's *Bruce Chatwin, Martin Amis, Julian Barnes: A bibliography*. London: Colophon Press, 1992.

The first edition of *London Fields*, published by Jonathan Cape, had a print-run of 40,000 copies, as did the first American edition, published by Harmony Books, New York, also in 1989. Cape also issued a limited edition of 150 numbered copies, each signed by the author. Penguin published the paperback version of the novel, which in the UK and Commonwealth has sold over a quarter million copies to date. This paperback is currently on its 18th printing.

The Spanish translation of the novel, published by Anagrama (1991), had a print-run of 6,000 copies, of which 5,264 copies were sold up to December 31, 1996. In April of that year, a second edition was published, with a print-run of 2,000 copies.

Seix-Barral S.A. first published *Tiempo de silencio* in 1961, and the novel is currently in its 40th edition. Approximately, a quarter of a million copies of the book have been sold in its original version.

John Calder, the publisher of the translated version of the novel (1965), admits that they can only go by memory regarding *Time of Silence*. He states that they probably printed 3,000 issues of the translation and bound 1,000 in hardcover, issuing the rest in paperback a year later, that is, in 1966. There is some uncertainty as to whether all the copies were sold, but there was no reprint. Columbia University Press reprinted the translation in 1989; the edition has achieved very low sales.

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